APPENDIX E
Comments and Coordination Report

State Road 30 (US 98) from 17th Avenue to Baybridge Drive

Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida

Financial Project ID No. 409334-1
Federal Aid Project No. 4221-078-P

March 2014

DRAFT
PENSACOLA BAY BRIDGE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY

Appendix E to the Environmental Assessment Comments & Coordination Report

SR 30 (US 98) From 17th Avenue To Baybridge Drive

Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida

Financial Project ID No. 409334-1
Federal Aid Project No. 4221-078-P

March 2014

DRAFT

Prepared by Reynolds, Smith, and Hills, Inc. at the direction of the Florida Department of Transportation, District 3
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I am a registered professional engineer in the State of Florida practicing with Reynolds, Smith, and Hills, Inc., a Florida corporation authorized to operate as an engineering business (EB No. EB0005620) by the State of Florida Department of Professional Regulation, Board of Professional Engineers, and that I have supervised the preparation and approve the evaluation, findings, opinions, conclusions, and technical advice hereby reported for:

Project: Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study
Location: SR 30 (US 98) from 17th Avenue to Baybridge Drive

Report: Comments & Coordination Report
Financial Project ID No.: 409334·1

This report includes a collection of correspondence with agencies, governmental entities, and the general public. I acknowledge that the content in this report is standard to the professional practice of transportation engineering and planning as applied through professional judgment and experience.

Name: Daniel Kristoff, Jr., P.E.

Florida PE Registration No.: 30379

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
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1.0 Introduction

This Comments and Coordination Report is a summary of the public and interagency coordination of the Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) on SR 30 (US 98) from 17th Avenue to Baybridge Drive. This report contains documentation of comments and responses to all meetings and coordination with government leaders, government agencies, community groups and individual citizens, and identifying the key issues and pertinent information received.
2.0 State & Federal Agency Coordination

This section documents the correspondence between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and various state and federal agencies involved with this project.

2.1 United States Coast Guard

Proposed Bridge Structure

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) is a federally maintained navigation channel and therefore bridge construction must be permitted by the USCG. The clearance guidance manual, published by the US Coast Guard, was referenced for clearance recommendations for bridges. Clearances for a fixed bridge spanning the GIWW between Apalachee Bay to Pensacola Bay, FL are as follows:

Vertical Clearance: 65.0 ft. Horizontal Clearance: 150.0 ft.

The new location of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement bridge will be immediately adjacent to the existing facility. The replacement structure would consist of twin bridges, each approximately 3 miles long. The bridge typical section consists of three through lanes in each direction adjacent to 10-foot inside and outside shoulders, parapet walls, and a 12-foot multi-use path. A distance of 10 feet between the twin structures is desirable to facilitate construction of the adjacent span and future maintenance and inspection requirements. With the 10-ft distance between the twin bridges, the total width of the footprint required between the outside edges of the replacement bridges is approximately 154 feet.

The existing width of the navigational clearance through the deep water channel is approximately 125 feet. The proposed navigational channel would be 150 feet, which is the minimum width recommended by the US Coast Guard Clearance Guide. The existing vertical clearance over the main channel is 51 feet. The vertical clearance proposed would be 65 feet at the edges of the navigational channel at mean high water (MHW).

Existing GIWW Bridge Structures

The nearest bridge structure to the proposed new Pensacola Bay Bridge is the Garson Point Bridge. The Garcon Point Bridge has a vertical clearance of 65.6 feet and is located approximately 6 miles east of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Garcon Point Bridge also spans the GIWW. The Escambia Bay Bridge has a vertical clearance of 65 feet and is approximately 10 miles north of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Escambia Bay Bridge provides marine access to upper Escambia Bay.

Navigation Data Collection

Initial determinations of reasonable navigation needs are based on facts and circumstances at the time of this proposal. Commercial and recreational waterway users provide the most accurate information regarding navigation requirements. To ensure that the proposed clearances will satisfy their needs, a variety of tools was used to gather information to assist in the determination of appropriate bridge navigational clearances including:
• Site visits to obtain first-hand knowledge of navigational needs through the proposed bridge site
  o Several field visits were completed to document existing conditions of the bridge.

• Conducting waterway user surveys:
  o Requests for comment on the proposed navigational clearances were requested from the following user groups:
    ▪ **American Waterway Operators Association.** Contact was made with John Harms at (703) 841-9300 ext. 292 on 5/22/2013. Mr. Harms stated that he would contact the local representation and have that person contact RS&H.
    ▪ **Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association.** An email requesting comments on the proposed clearances was sent to Mr. William Lensmyer, at: William.Lensmyer@emrgroup.com on 5/22/2013.
    ▪ **Port of Pensacola.** An email requesting comments on the proposed clearances was sent to Ms. Glenda White at: gwhite@portofpensacola.com on 5/22/2013.
    ▪ **Pensacola Yacht Club.** Susan McKinnon was contacted via phone on 5/23/2013. An email was also sent to SusanMcKinnon@me.com.

• Consulting with and conducting interagency meetings:
  o Consultation with the US Coast Guard was initiated through the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. Other Federal, state, and local agencies with missions of national defense or state and local law enforcement were included in ETDM correspondence. As part of the bridge permitting process, public notices will be issued to mariners, property owners and other interested parties who have the opportunity to comment on or object to the proposed clearances. The final approval of clearances will be through the US Coast Guard Public Notice Process.

• Conducting public meetings:
  o Three public meetings have been held as of May 2013. The proposed 65 foot vertical clearance and 150 foot horizontal clearance has been presented along with other project information. Public comments received that pertain to the proposed bridge clearance and responses are provided below:

  **Comment:** High enough for sailboats to go under; that’s good for locals and local tourism, and there is a place/pier for fisherman; that’s good for families that depend on the extra protein (Gissendanner, 10/5/11)

  **Response:** A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. The proposed height of the replacement bridge will consider access for sailboats...
and the height of the upstream bridges. Many different aspects of the area play a role in the design process, including businesses and tourism. The fishing pier is a valuable resource to the area and will be considered when determining which corridor the replacement bridge will be built on.

**Comment:** I am an avid sailor and my boat needs over 52’ clearance. Please make center channel clearance the standard 65’ *(Gissendanner, 10/5/11)*

**Response:** A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. Many different aspects of the area are playing a role in the design process, including business and tourism. The proposed height of the replacement bridge will consider access for sailboats and the height of the upstream bridges.

**Comment:** When the bridge is replaced increasing the vessel clearance to 65 feet would be a definite advantage for sailboats. *(Milne, 02-17-2012)*

**Response:** Comment documented for the public record.

Exhibits 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 display two e-mail exchanges with the USGC.

Two copies of the Draft Environmental Assessment were sent via overnight delivery to the USCG on January 14, 2014. Exhibit 2.1.3 contains an e-mail dated March 7, 2014 from Mr. James R. Wetherington, Bridge Specialist, regarding the USCG’s agreement with the Central East and Central West Alternatives articulated in the Draft Environmental Assessment as well as the navigational clearances contingent upon future concurrence from the waterway users.
Arnio, Nicholi

From: Philip.R.Johnson@uscg.mil on behalf of Johnson, Philip Civilian [Philip.R.Johnson@uscg.mil]
Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:45 AM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Cc: Frank, David Civilian; Wade, Kay; Wetherington, James GS; Gagliano, Donna
Subject: RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Clearance

Nick,

I apologize for not getting back to you sooner. I have been out of the office since mid-week last week. Please go to the Coast Guard Bridge Administration website, click on Guide Clearances and read what it explains about bridge clearances. The website can be opened at: www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg551/Bridge.asp There are no established guide clearances for Pensacola Bay. We cannot specify a certain clearance for a proposed bridge, because the needs of navigation may have changed since the existing bridge was permitted and constructed. The Coast Guard can only permit a permanent transportation structure across a navigable waterway that meets the reasonable needs of present and projected navigation. In this regard, a formal navigation study should be conducted for Pensacola Bay and confluent waterways to make a determination as to what those needs are and what they will be in the foreseeable future. The navigation study should include, but not be limited to, contact with property owners upstream and downstream of the proposed bridge site, all commercial facilities, commercial transportation interests, as well as Federal, state and local agencies with missions of national defense or state and local law enforcement. Once the navigation study has been completed, navigational clearance for a proposed bridge can be proposed and submitted with a bridge permit application that includes drawings showing the clearances. Please refer to the Coast Guard Bridge Permit Application Guide also accessible through the above mentioned website. As part of the bridge permitting process, public notices will be issued to mariners, property owners and other interested parties who have the opportunity to comment on or object to the proposed clearances. In some cases, public meetings/hearings may be requested and will be held by either the bridge permit applicant or the Coast Guard.

I hope I have answered your questions about the procedure for determining and proposing bridge clearances. If you have other questions or need additional guidance, please contact me or Mr. Frank by email or at 504-671-2128.

Phil Johnson
Eighth Coast Guard District
Bridge Administration Branch
New Orleans, LA
504-671-2128

-----Original Message-----
From: Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com [mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com]
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2011 1:35 PM
To: Johnson, Philip Civilian
Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge Clearance

Hello Mr. Johnson,

I am working on a NEPA Study for the Pensacola Bay Bridge in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida. In developing the Purpose and Need for this study, I have found conflicting information on whether the bridge meets horizontal and vertical clearances. The current bridge clearances are: Horizontal, 125', and Vertical, 50'. Do these meet the current Coast Guard guidelines? Thanks so much.
Nick

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL  32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061 Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com
mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com  LOGO:Improving Your World
Mr. Arnio,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the information below. With regards to the final approval of clearances, our final approval is through our Public Notice Process; however, the groups listed below will provide the most accurate information regarding commercial waterway use. You should also reach out to the recreational community (Pensacola Yacht Club, recreational fleeting and mooring facilities, marinas) to insure that the clearances as proposed will satisfy their needs also. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

David Frank

From: Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2013 3:02 PM
To: D08-DG-District-DPB
Cc: Gagliano, Donna CIV; Kristoff, Dan
Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study - Bridge Replacement Clearance

Good afternoon Mr. Frank,

I am writing as a follow-up to our phone call last Friday. As previously discussed, RS&H is preparing the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Florida Department of Transportation. Our Draft document has been reviewed by FHWA and includes several comments related to the proposed clearances and US Coast Guard concurrence.

EA Comments related to US Coast Guard participation/review include the following:

1. **General Comment:** Coordinate the EA with the USCG prior to submittal to FHWA for approval for public availability so that the USCG accepts and concurs in the EA and its findings related to its jurisdiction. Attach a letter or e-mail to the Appendix and reference their concurrence in the EA itself.

2. **Navigation including navigational issues; coordination with USCG as a cooperating agency; USCG position on navigation and bridge location; reference any USCG letters in Appendix.**

3. **Navigation demonstrate coordination with the USCG on bridge vertical and horizontal clearances.** Discuss the channel alignment, depths, clearances and widths. Discuss the need for pier protection based on ship impact data history. Discuss USCG permit navigational requirements for the bridge, channel approaches and marine traffic. Reference USCG coordination correspondence. USCG recommended in the Program Summary Report that the US Navy also be consulted considering navigational issues. Has this consultation occurred? Have waterway users been consulted regarding navigational clearances? See the attached SAMPLE Navigational discussion taken from another project involving a bridge replacement. I have also included a SAMPLE USCG Concurrence letter for your information and use. We would want a similar letter on this project at both the EA Public Availability stage and final document stage.

As discussed on the phone, US Coast Guard does not set or approve bridge clearances. The clearance guidance manual, published by the US Coast Guard, will be referenced for clearance recommendations for bridges from Apalachee Bay to Pensacola Bay. This recommendation is currently 150 feet horizontally and 65 feet vertically. To ensure navigation...
standards are acceptable with the boating community, coordination with the following groups will be completed and submitted with the US Coast Guard permit when the time to apply is upon us:

a. **American Waterway Operators Association.** First contact made with John Harms at (703) 841-9300 ext. 292
b. **Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association.** First contact made with William Lensmyer, William.Lensmyer@emrgroup.com.
c. **Port of Pensacola.** First contact made with Glenda White, gwhite@portofpensacola.com.

Please respond with your concurrence or any additional efforts you require to ensure the input from the local boating community is comprehensively addressed.

Sincerely,

Nick

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**Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE**  
*Project Manager*  
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101  
Tallahassee, FL  32308  
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061  
Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com

Visit our website at [www.rsandh.com](http://www.rsandh.com)  
Connect with RS&H on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) [Twitter](https://twitter.com) [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com)

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*Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.*
Ms. Swanson,
The Coast Guard is in agreement with either the Central East or Central West alternatives as spelled out in the EA. The coast Guard is also in agreement with the navigational clearances as spelled out in the EA contingent upon the concurrence from the waterway users.
Please let us know if there are any questions or concerns. I will have our comments on the EA for you after my return, as discussed.
Respectfully,

Jim

James R. Wetherington
Bridge Specialist, USCG D8 (dpb)
500 Poydras St.
New Orleans, La 70130
phone: 504-671-2128
fax: 504-671-2133
2.2 State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)

Per Chapter 12 of the FDOT Project Design and Environment Manual, coordination with FDOT, FHWA, and SHPO is required. Exhibit 2.2.1, shown on the following pages, displays the letter from District 3 to the FHWA requesting SHPO concurrence. Page 4 of the letter depicts the concurrence received from the State Historic Preservation Office.

A second letter was sent by FDOT on June 13, 2013 describing the findings of archaeological diver investigations for five targets located within 164 feet (50 meters) of a refined Area of Potential Effect. This letter accompanied a technical memorandum that serves as an addendum to the 2012 Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, which was approved as shown in Exhibit 2.2.1. Exhibit 2.2.2 contains the letter and corresponding FHWA and SHPO approval for the addendum addressing diver investigations.
Exhibit 2.2.1: 2013-03-11 District 3 Letter to FHWA Requesting SHPO Concurrence

Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

ANANTH PRASAD, P.E.
SECRETARY

District Environmental Management Office
Post Office Box 607
Chipley, Florida 32428-0607

March 11, 2013

Mr. David Hawk, P.E.
Acting Division Administrator
ATTN: Joseph Sullivan
Federal Highway Administration
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Subject: Cultural Resources Assessment
FPID #: 409334-1
Location: SR 30 (US 98) over Pensacola Bay (BN: 480035)
County: Escambia

Dear Mr. Hawk:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 3, proposes to replace the US 98 bridge over Pensacola Bay in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 3, is currently conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to replace the existing US 98 bridge over Pensacola Bay with a new structure. The approximate study limits extend from Baybridge Drive in the City of Gulf Breeze to North 17th Avenue in the City of Pensacola.

On behalf of the Department, a cultural resources assessment was conducted in support of this project by Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc. (SEARCH). Per the Cultural Resources Probability Assessment (CRPA) prepared for the project in August 2012, the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the terrestrial survey was defined to include the existing bridge footprint and right-of-way in addition to the maximum proposed right-of-way for all three corridors. The APE was extended to the back or side property lines of parcels adjacent to the project, or a limit of 100 meters (330 feet) from the maximum proposed right-of-way. As the project includes a potential flyover at 17th Avenue, the APE was extended on the north end of the project to include any project-related effects associated with these improvements as well. A separate APE was defined for the maritime survey and includes a 152-meter (500-foot) buffer to either side of the maximum proposed right-of-way for all three corridors along the bridge.

The architectural survey resulted in the identification and evaluation of three historic resources: the Philip D. Beall Sr. Memorial Bridge (Pensacola Bay Bridge [FDOT Bridge No. 480035]); the
wayside park located at the north end of the bridge in Escambia County (8ES03756); and the
wayside park located at the south end of the bridge in Santa Rosa County (8SR02175). All three
resources are recommended not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
(NRHP). No potential NRHP districts were identified due to the lack of concentration of historic
structures. It is the opinion of the District that the proposed bridge replacement will have no
effect on historic resources listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP and no further architectural
history survey is recommended.

The terrestrial archaeology survey resulted in the identification of one archaeological occurrence,
which does not meet the minimum criteria for NRHP listing. A portion of site 8ES01363 was
identified by a single shovel test positive for cultural material. Based on the paucity of artifacts
(n=2) recovered during the current survey, there is insufficient information to make an NRHP
recommendation about 8ES01363 overall. However, the site as expressed within the Pensacola
Bay Bridge Replacement APE does not appear to have the potential to offer information
important to our understanding of the prehistory or history. It is the opinion of the District that
no terrestrial archaeological resources listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP will be affected
by the proposed bridge replacement and no further archaeological survey is recommended for the
terrestrial portion of the project APE.

The maritime remote-sensing survey identified 12 targets that are recommended for additional
archaeological investigations should any bottom impacts, including anchoring, spudding, or
mooring of construction vessels, be proposed in their vicinity. SEARCH recommends that a 50-
meter buffer be applied to the perimeter of these 12 targets and that these buffers are either
avoided or subjected to additional investigations should project-related impacts be proposed
within them.

Five of these targets (M01, M07, M33, M51, and S189) are located within 50 meters of the
proposed improvements. As such, the District intends to conduct Phase II diver investigations of
these five targets. The remaining seven targets (M06, M11, M12, M15, M18, M19, and M20)
are more than 50 meters from the project alignments and will be avoided during construction.
No bottom impacts, including anchoring, mooring, or spudding of construction vessels, as well
as soil/sediment boring or vibrcoring, will occur within 50 meters of these targets. Should
project plans change to involve impacts within 50 meters of these remaining targets, FDOT will
invite consultation regarding their treatment. The results of the Phase II diver investigations on
M01, M07, M33, M51, and S189 will be submitted to your office under separate cover as an
addendum to the enclosed Phase I CRAS report.

Our office requests that you seek concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer
(SHPO) that this project will have no adverse effect on terrestrial archaeological or historical
properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or otherwise of
historical, archaeological, or architectural value. Our office further seeks concurrence that a 50-
meter buffer is appropriate for consideration of the maritime targets, and that because they are
located at least 50 meters beyond the project alternatives, no further work will be conducted on
Targets M06, M11, M12, M15, M18, M19, and M20 at this time.

www.dot.state.fl.us
March 11, 2013
FPID #: 409334-1
SR 30 (US 98) over Pensacola Bay
Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties
Page 3

This information is being provided in accordance with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, which are implemented by the procedures contained in 36 C.F.R., Part 800, as well as the provisions contained in Section 267.061, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 1A-46, Florida Administrative Code.

If you need any additional information, please contact me at (850) 330-1508 or email me at amanda.marshall@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Amanda Marshall
District Cultural Resources Coordinator
The FHWA finds the attached Cultural Resources Assessment Report complete and sufficient and √ approves / ___ does not approve, the above recommendations and findings.

The FHWA requests the SHPO’s opinion on the sufficiency of the attached report and the SHPO’s opinion on the recommendations and findings contained in this cover letter and in the comment block below.

FHWA Comments:

[Handwritten text]

We look forward to a meeting with your office
to discuss the maritime recommendations.

/s/ Buddy Arrill
David Hawk, P.E.
Acting Division Administrator
Florida Division
Federal Highway Administration

3-14-13

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer finds the attached Cultural Resources Assessment Report complete and sufficient and concurs with the recommendations and findings provided in this cover letter for SHPO/DHR Project File Number 2012-1022.

/Signature
State Historic Preservation Officer
For Review and Compliance
Florida Division of Historical Resources

4/11/13

www.dot.state.fl.us
District Environmental Management Office
Post Office Box 607
Chipley, Florida 32428-0607

June 13, 2013

Mr. David Hawk, P.E.
Acting Division Administrator
ATTN: Joseph Sullivan
Federal Highway Administration
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303

RE: Cultural Resources Assessment (Archaeological Diver Investigations)
FPID #: 409334-1
Location: US 98 - Pensacola Bay Bridge
County: Escambia and Santa Rosa

Dear Mr. Hawk,

The enclosed report presents the findings of archaeological diver investigations in support of the US 98 Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project. Work was conducted to identify the sources of five previously recorded remote-sensing targets – Anomalies M01, M07, M33, and M51, and Contact S189 – and assess their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The five targets were identified by Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc. (SEARCH) during the 2012 cultural resource assessment survey (CRAS) conducted in support of the replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge (SEARCH 2012, Florida Master Site File [FMSF] Survey No. TBA). SEARCH initially recommended additional investigations of 12 remote-sensing targets within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), or avoidance by 50 meters (164 feet). The five targets investigated are located within, or within 50 meters (164 feet) of, a refined corridor of potential impact that is narrower than the APE investigated during the Phase I remote-sensing survey. The present technical memorandum serves as an addendum to the 2012 Pensacola Bay Bridge CRAS report (SEARCH 2012).

SEARCH does not recommend Anomaly M07 as potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP as it maintains no historical significance, context, or integrity. None of the remaining remote sensing targets investigated—Anomalies M01, M33, and M51 and Contacts S149 and S189—is a submerged cultural resource. SEARCH does not recommend any of these targets as potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP. Should unanticipated cultural finds be discovered during
construction activities, SEARCH recommends cessation of work until a determination of their significance can be made. SEARCH also recommends that qualified maritime archaeologists investigate the remaining seven magnetic anomalies (M06, M11, M12, M15, M18, M19, and M20) recommended as potential submerged cultural resources should FDOT anticipate direct or indirect construction-related impacts within the larger APE outside of the construction corridor. Indirect impacts would include any potential disturbance of the bay floor (e.g., ingress/egress of construction vessels in the shallower portions of the APE, or anchoring, mooring, or spudding of construction vessels).

Based on current project plans, it is the opinion of the District that the proposed undertaking will have no effect on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. However, as FDOT is aware of the potential involvement of sensitive resources, FDOT will establish a project review project in the event the project design changes. Any project changes will be provided to FHWA and SHPO for comment. FDOT will also conduct additional work (e.g., additional diver investigations), if necessary and warranted by future changes to the project alignments or staging/anchoring areas.

I respectfully request your concurrence with the findings of the enclosed report. Should you concur, please indicate such in the signature box below and submit the unbound copy of this document along with the accompanying Survey Log Sheet and Florida Master Site File forms to the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, for review and comment.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me at (850) 330-1508.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Amanda Marshall
Cultural Resources Coordinator

CC:
Mr. Hawk
June 13, 2013
Page 3

The FHWA finds the attached Cultural Resources Assessment Report complete and sufficient and ☑ approves / ___ does not approve the above recommendations and findings.

The FHWA requests the SHPO's opinion on the sufficiency of the attached report and the SHPO's opinion on the recommendations and findings contained in this cover letter and in the comment block below.

FHWA Comments:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

/\)

For: Martin E. Knopp
Division Administrator (Acting)
Florida Division
Federal Highway Administration


6/26/13
Date

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer:

☑ finds the attached report complete and sufficient and ☑ concurs/ ___ does not concur with the findings and recommendations contained in this cover letter.

___ does not find the attached report complete and sufficient and requires additional information in order to provide an opinion on the potential effects of the proposed project on historic resources.

/\)

Robert Bendus
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer


7/2/13
Date

2013.02665
DHR No.

www.dot.state.fl.us
2.3 Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

Coordination between District 3 and FDEP has occurred regarding the use of Project GreenShores as a mitigation site for potential salt marsh impacts. Exhibit 2.3.1 illustrates the correspondence regarding the use of the site.
From: Giddens, Joy [mailto:Joy.Giddens@dot.state.fl.us]
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 10:02 AM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Cc: Bruner, Joseph Brandon; Kristoff, Dan; Heeg, Paul
Subject: RE: Project GreenShores Phase II

Hi Nick,

Okay. They are going to begin a phase II of the greenshores project. That’s fine. I’m really more interested in letting them know we anticipate a small impact within their green shore project, and mitigation for that specific impact could be accomplished within the same area. I want to make sure the future Design/Build team for the bridge project has some options.

Thank you for updating me on DEP’s plans regarding Project Green Shores.

Joy Giddens
District Permits Coordinator
Environmental Management Office
joy.giddens@dot.state.fl.us
850-330-1505 direct line

From: Arnio, Nicholi [mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com]
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 8:56 AM
To: Giddens, Joy
Cc: Bruner, Joseph Brandon; Kristoff, Dan; Heeg, Paul
Subject: Project GreenShores Phase II

Good morning Joy,

I just spoke with Andy Joslyn at FDEP concerning Project GreenShores. He mentioned that you spoke to him about avoiding/minimizing impacts to Phase I through discharge retention/dissipation. As far as GreenShores Phase II goes, NRDA (Natural Resource Damage Assessment) has just been awarded (10-14 days ago) $11 million in BP Funds to continue with Phase II. Andy was not sure that this would fully fund the completion of Phase II, but he was going to attempt to find out.

Based on this conversation, we may need to find an alternate mitigation site. I will keep you in the loop on further communications with FDEP.

Thanks,
Nick

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061
Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com

Visit our website at www.rsandh.com
2.4 **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)**

The FFWCC has been contacted regarding potential impacts to their property in the northwest quadrant of the 17th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway intersection. Coordination regarding potential impacts is ongoing.

The FDOT contacted the FFWCC via a letter dated August 19, 2013 and requested a review of the WEBAR and EFH Assessment. FFWCC responded with a letter dated October 16, 2013. FDOT's letter of request and the FFWCC response are included as Exhibits 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, respectively.
August 19, 2013

Lt. Col. Louie Roberson
Regional Director
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Northwest Region Office
3911 Highway 2321
Panama City, Florida 32409

RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties

Financial Project Identification Number: 409334-1-22-02

Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report

Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

Dear Lt. Col. Roberson,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 3, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), for the proposed replacement of the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Pensacola Bay Bridge, or “Three-Mile Bridge,” is a 2.96-mile long, 4-lane bridge carrying State Road (SR) 30 [US Highway 98 (US 98)] across Pensacola Bay and connecting downtown Pensacola in Escambia County with the City of Gulf Breeze in Santa Rosa County. The Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study begins just west of the intersection of 17th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway and ends at the intersection of Baybridge Drive and Gulf Breeze Parkway. Both Bayfront Parkway and Gulf Breeze Parkway are designated as SR 30 (US 98) within the study area. The project is located within Townships 2 and 3 South and within Range 29 West.

We carefully reviewed the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s (FFWCC) list of Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species updated January 2013 and other resources to develop a list of species that “may be present” within the project area. The attached Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report and Essential Fish Habitat Assessment contain information collected for the listed species that may be present within the project area and the assessment of potential impacts associated with the project. Informal Section 7 Consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USWFS) and National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) is underway.

The FFWCC provided comments on the project during the FDOT’s Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. These documents are being provided at the request of FHWA and serve as follow-up to coordination in the ETDM Process. The project has the
potential to impact listed species including the Gulf Sturgeon, West Indian Manatee, and sea turtles. Please review and provide comment on the reports and the commitments described below.

**Project Description**

The proposed project involves demolition and replacement of the existing bridge due to the deteriorating conditions, low sufficiency rating, and lack of modern safety features. The FDOT District 3 has assigned replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge as the number one priority within the work program. Funds have been programmed for the bridge replacement, and FDOT has committed to start construction by 2019.

The Central East and Central West build alternatives are being carried forward for further evaluation in this PD&E study, as explained in the attached reports. Both alternatives include a flyover configuration that would be constructed in the future when traffic volumes increase. The north and south landfalls of the Pensacola Bay Bridge are considered developed lands and include recreational, commercial, residential land uses as well as publicly owned lands. A maximum of 0.07 acre of tidal salt marsh would be directly impacted by the Central West Alternative. The Central East Alternative impacts less than 0.01 acre of jurisdictional wetlands. This wetland impact is considered insignificant due to the limited acreage involved. Mitigation for any unavoidable wetland impacts is proposed.

**Commitments**

In order to ensure that adverse impacts to the protected species within the vicinity of the project area will not occur, FDOT will abide by the following commitments which are included in the Environmental Assessment:

**Gulf Sturgeon** - USFWS and FFWCC approved protection guidelines will be followed during construction to minimize potential impacts to the species. The guidelines include:

- Avoidance of nocturnal pile driving from November through April;
- Avoidance of in-water explosive work from November through April;
- Minimization of multiple pile driving operations so that the maximum distance between the southernmost and northernmost pile driving operation does not exceed one kilometer;
- Avoidance of mooring work barges and vessels in shallow shoreline waters from November through April; and,
- Avoidance and minimization of effects to habitat used for winter feeding.

**West Indian Manatee** - The most current USFWS guidelines “Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work” will be incorporated into the final project design specifications and the construction contractor will be informed of the necessity to follow these guidelines during the construction. The guidelines include restrictions on blasting, monitoring of turbidity barriers, exclusionary grating on culverts, presence of manatee observers during in-water work, a defined or limited construction window, and no nighttime work. The current guidelines are included in Appendix C of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment. The use of the manatee protection guidelines during construction will also

Lt. Col. Roberson

www.dot.state.fl.us

August 19, 2013

Page 2 of 3
provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

**Sea Turtles** - Sea turtle nests have not been documented in close proximity to the project area, but nesting has been documented at Perdido Key, Perdido Key State Park, Gulf Island National Seashore, Pensacola Beach, Navarre Beach, Navarre Beach State Park and Eglin Air Force Base. The potential exists, however, for disorientation of hatchlings by the increased luminosity from the proposed bridge lighting in combination with the ambient atmospheric glow from the developed areas of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. This disorientation causes the hatchlings to head away from the Gulf, leaving them exposed to increased predation and ultimately causing an increased rate of mortality. To reduce this potential impact, coordination with USFWS and FFWCC will continue during the design phase in order to incorporate appropriate lighting that meets the needs of traffic safety as well as provides for the enhanced viability of sea turtle hatchlings. The use of the manatee protection guidelines during construction will also provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

**EFH** - Information concerning the potential impacts from construction activity to target EFH species to protect these species is addressed in the *Essential Fish Habitat Assessment* for this project. The use of rubbleized concrete from the existing bridge for enhancement of sea grass areas or offshore reefs is being explored and will be finalized after discussions with FDEP and District 3.

If you have any questions about this project, the please contact J. Brandon Bruner, P.E., at (850) 330-1509 or via email at joseph.bruner@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

J. Brandon Bruner, P.E.
District Environmental Management Engineer

Enclosure
October 16, 2013

J. Brandon Bruner
Florida Department of Transportation District 3
District Environmental Management Engineer
1074 Highway 90
Chipley, FL 32428
Joseph.bruner@dot.myflorida.com

Re: Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environmental Study – FDOT
District 3, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties

Dear Mr. Bruner:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff has reviewed the measures proposed by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 3 to address adverse effects on wildlife and habitat resources on the above-referenced project based on the results of the Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E). FWC provides the following comments and recommendations for your consideration, in accordance with Chapter 379 Florida Statutes and Article 4, Section 9 Florida Constitution.

The FDOT District 3 is proposing to replace the existing 2.96-mile-long, four-lane bridge on US-98 over Pensacola Bay. The bridge connects the City of Pensacola in Escambia County to Gulf Breeze in Santa Rosa County. Our agency evaluated the potential fish, wildlife, and habitat resource impacts of this project and provided comments to FDOT during the review of ETDM 13248 on August 31, 2011 at the initiation of the current PD&E study. The following overview discusses current project commitments for listed species, identifies impact avoidance and minimization measures, and offers final advisory recommendations for consideration prior to FDOT’s submittal of this project to the Florida State Clearinghouse within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

As part of the ongoing PD&E Study, FDOT has completed a Wetland Evaluation Report, a Biological Assessment, and an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment to address protection measures for both federally and state-listed wildlife species and other protected resources in the project area. In addition, an Informal Section 7 Consultation is currently being accomplished with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). FDOT also relates that the Central East and Central West Alternatives have been selected for further study and evaluation. Both the north and south landfalls of these two Alternatives are considered developed, but these areas also include recreational, commercial, and public lands. Wetland impacts of the two alignments are low, as the Central East Alternative involves a maximum of 0.07 acres of coastal saltmarsh, while 0.01 acres of jurisdictional wetlands would be affected on the Central West Alternative. FDOT relates that their studies show that the project has the potential to impact Federally Endangered (FE) and Threatened (FT) species including the Gulf sturgeon (FT), Florida manatee (FE), and marine turtles, which based on our review, could include the green sea turtle (FE), loggerhead sea turtle (FT), leatherback sea turtle (FE), Kemp’s ridley (FE), and hawksbill sea turtle (FE).
FDOT has made a commitment to adhere to the NMFS and USFWS Construction Special Provisions, Gulf Sturgeon Protection Guidelines for the Gulf sturgeon which includes the following features: avoidance of nighttime pile driving from November through April; avoidance of in-water explosive work from November through April; minimization of multiple pile driving operations so that the maximum distance between the southernmost and northernmost operation does not exceed 1.0 kilometer; avoidance of mooring work barges and vessels in shallow shoreline waters from November through April; and avoidance and minimization of effects to habitat used for winter feeding. Please contact Lisa Gregg of FWC’s Division of Marine Fisheries Management in Tallahassee at lisa.gregg@MyFWC.com or by phone at (850) 617-9621 for coordination related to permitting issues and requirements for the Gulf sturgeon.

FDOT further states that they will follow and adhere to the most current guidelines for protection of the Florida manatee which is currently FWC’s Standard Manatee and Marine Turtle Construction Conditions for In-water Work (2012). These guidelines as noted in FDOT’s avoidance and minimization plan, include restrictions on blasting, monitoring of turbidity barriers; exclusionary grating on culverts; presence of manatee observers during in-water work; and a defined or limited construction window and no nighttime work. Our assessment also indicates that the Federally Endangered smalltooth sawfish potentially occurs in Pensacola Bay; therefore, we further recommend that the NMFS Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Condition guidelines be followed during all in-water project work.

FDOT also notes that sea turtle nesting has been documented on barrier islands located southwest and southeast of the project area which include locations at Perdido Key, Perdido Key State Park, Gulf Island National Seashore, Pensacola Beach, Navarre Beach, Navarre Beach State Park, and Eglin Air Force Base. The potential exists for disorientation of hatchlings and adult nesting females from the proposed bridge lighting. In this regard, FDOT has committed to coordination with the USFWS and FWC during the bridge design phase to incorporate lighting which meets both traffic safety needs and enhanced protection for sea turtles. To minimize impacts to nearby marine turtle nesting beaches, our agency favors bridge lights that meet dark sky standards to minimize visibility from the nesting beach as well as contribution to cumulative sky glow. Possible recommendations include use of full cut off, well-shielded fixtures fitted with long wavelength light sources, such as low pressure sodium or amber LED. High pressure sodium fixtures may be acceptable if well shielded to eliminate direct visibility from the nesting beaches, however, metal halide lights are not recommended. FWC is committed to working with FDOT to resolve this issue and finalize an appropriate bridge lighting plan. For technical assistance and further coordination concerning potential impacts to manatees, sea turtles, and bridge lighting issues, FDOT is encouraged to contact our Imperiled Species Management Section at imperiledspecies@myfwc.com or (850) 922-4330 early in the project design phase and wetland permitting planning process.

FWC is pleased that FDOT is considering opportunities for the use of concrete rubble from the existing bridge for construction of offshore reefs as recommended in our 2011 ETDM comments. At the present time, our Division of Marine Fisheries Management is aware that the Escambia County Artificial Reef Coordinator has received formal approval to include the necessary artificial reef construction oversight when demolition of the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge begins. Early contact with our agency and our County
partners is essential to accomplish required permitting, scheduling, reef site selection and approval, and coordination with potential contractors for transport of rubble. This will also ensure that special conditions and standards are defined and followed. These standards include such things as compliance with material weight and dimension standards, removal of steel rebar from bridge reef material to ensure public safety and minimize loss of fishing gear, and compliance with approved navigational clearance at the reef site. For further coordination on pier or artificial reef development and input on the protection of marine resources, please contact FWC biologist Keith Mille at keith.mille@MyFWC.com or (850) 617-9633 in the Division of Marine Fisheries Management in Tallahassee.

The marine habitats of Pensacola Bay are collectively a very productive system and support important commercial and recreational fisheries, listed species, and nature-based tourism. The productive seagrass beds, oyster bars, mudflats, tidal creeks and areas of saltmarsh, together with open bay waters, provide habitat for the support of spotted seatrout, red drum, Atlantic croaker, black drum, striped mullet, Gulf flounder, blue crabs, bay scallops and many other species including sea turtles, Florida manatee, and the Gulf sturgeon. The protection of marine plant communities and the quality and clarity of bay waters are important factors in the continued productivity of this marine system, which directly supports recreational opportunities for local residents, tourists, and employment. Although some drainage retention areas could be sited along the upland portions of the bridge approach, due to the significant length of the proposed new bridge, runoff containing oils, greases, and sediment will necessarily be discharged into Pensacola Bay via bridge scuppers. Therefore, we support an off-site compensatory mitigation plan for improvement of water quality in the Bay and FWC biologists are available to provide technical assistance and work with interagency staff to address this.

In addition, it also appears that it may be necessary to locate sizable staging areas along the bridge approach causeways for possible barge docking facilities and the storage of construction materials, fuels, equipment, and other associated materials. If this is necessary, the locations of the staging areas should be in disturbed areas to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife habitat resources, including listed species, and the selection of this area should be vetted with state and federal resource and permitting agencies. Since many types of shorebirds and wading birds use the shoreline and littoral zone areas along the causeway, onsite habitat assessments and wildlife surveys by FDOT’s consultant should be a key component in the selection process. Respectively, impact avoidance measures should be addressed for shorebird species, some of which are State listed as Threatened (ST) or Species of Special Concern (SSC), including the snowy plover (ST), piping plover (FT), American oystercatcher (SSC), least tern (ST), and black skimmer (SSC). Please contact FWC biologist Amy Raybuck in our Panama City office at (850) 767-3622 or amy.raybuck@MyFWC.com concerning wildlife survey methodology, and input on avoidance and impact minimization measures.

If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Chabre either by phone at (850) 410-5367 or at FWCConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com. If
you have specific technical questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact FWC biologist Terry Gilbert at (850) 728-1103 or by email at terry.gilbert@MyFWC.com.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer D. Goff
Land Use Planning Program Administrator
Office of Conservation Planning Services

jdg/tg
ENV 1-13-2
Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement PDE_18106_101613

cc:  Ted Hoehn, FWC, Ted.hoehn@MyFWC.com
     Amy Raybuck, FWC, Amy.raybuck@MyFWC.com
     Lisa Gregg, FWC, Lisa.gregg@MyFWC.com
     Mary Duncan, FWC, Mary.duncan@MyFWC.com
     Kelly Roberts, FWC, Kelly.roberts@MyFWC.com
     Karen.Schanzle, FWC, Karen.schanzle@MyFWC.com
     Keith Mille, FWC, Keith.mille@MyFWC.com
     Jon Dodrill, FWC, Jon.dodrill@MyFWC.com
     Jeff Wilcox, FWC, Jeffrey.wilcox@myfwc.com
2.5 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

The NMFS was contact via letter from FDOT on July 31, 2013 and via teleconference on August 19, 2013. The agency was asked to review the WEBAR and EFH Assessment and provided a response on August 23, 2013. The FDOT letter, teleconference minutes, and response from NMFS are included as Exhibits 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3, respectively.
July 31, 2013

Dr. David Rydene
Fisheries Biologist
National Marine Fisheries
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701

RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties
Financial Project Identification Number: 409334-1-22-02
Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report
Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

Dear Dr. Rydene,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 3, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), for the proposed replacement of the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Pensacola Bay Bridge, or “Three-Mile Bridge,” is a 2.96-mile long, 4-lane bridge carrying State Road (SR) 30 [US Highway 98 (US 98)] across Pensacola Bay and connecting downtown Pensacola in Escambia County with the City of Gulf Breeze in Santa Rosa County. The Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study begins just west of the intersection of 17th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway and ends at the intersection of Baybridge Drive and Gulf Breeze Parkway. Both Bayfront Parkway and Gulf Breeze Parkway are designated as SR 30 (US 98) within the study area. The project is located with Townships 2 and 3 South and within Range 29 West.

We carefully reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) System and your comments in the Programming Screen Summary Report (Project #13248- Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement) to develop a list of species and critical habitat that “may be present” within the project area. The attached Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report and Essential Fish Habitat Assessment describe the listed species and essential fish habitat (EFH) that may be present within the project area and the assessment of potential impacts. As part of the PD&E process, FHWA requires concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that the proposed project does not adversely affect federally threatened and endangered species. The FDOT would like to initiate Informal Section 7 Consultation under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) versus Formal through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because specific project design details and construction methods will not be finalized until the
design and built phase. Formal consultation will be conducted during the permitting phase by the FHWA if necessary.

Project Description

The proposed project involves demolition and replacement of the existing bridge due to the deteriorating conditions, low sufficiency rating, and lack of modern safety features. The FDOT District 3 has assigned replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge as the number one priority within the work program. Funds have been programmed for the bridge replacement, and FDOT has committed to start construction by 2019.

The Central East and Central West build alternatives, are being carried forward for further evaluation in this PD&E study, as explained in the attached reports. Both alternatives include a flyover configuration that would be constructed in the future when traffic volumes increase. The impacts to the natural environment and Pensacola Bay are similar. A maximum of 0.07 acre of tidal salt marsh would be directly impacted by the Central West Alternative. The Central East Alternative impacts less than 0.01 acre of jurisdictional wetlands. This wetland impact is considered insignificant due to the limited acreage involved. Mitigation for any unavoidable wetland impacts is proposed. The north and south landfalls of the Pensacola Bay Bridge are considered developed lands and include recreational, commercial, residential land uses as well as publicly owned lands.

The FDOT will continue to develop avoidance alternatives and/or measures to minimize harm to natural resources during the design phase, in accordance with the agencies comments received during the FDOT’s Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. As part of the FDOT’s ETDM Process, project information was distributed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD), USFWS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), NMFS, and other governmental agencies. The responses of all these agencies are included in Appendix A of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment. NMFS’s principle concern is the possibility of seagrass beds occurring near the existing bridge approaches. This concern was addressed by conducting multiple in-water seagrass surveys. No seagrasses were found in the vicinity of the bridge approaches.

Protected Species and Habitat

The Gulf sturgeon, Piping Plover, West Indian manatee, and sea turtles (Loggerhead, Green Sea, and Kemp’s Ridley) could potentially be within the project area and could be affected by the project. The project area is designated as Critical Habitat for the Gulf sturgeon. It is also within the Consultation area for the West Indian manatee. Based on the type of project, proposed construction techniques, and the FDOT’s commitment to implement standard protection measures, the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” these species and the Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon.
The proposed project is “not likely to adversely affect” the Wood Stork. The USFWS and FFWCC databases revealed no rookeries in close proximity to the project area with the nearest nest site being located approximately 170 miles to the east near Tallahassee. The proposed project is anticipated to have “no effect” on the leatherback sea turtle. Due to its preference for pelagic habitat, the species is not anticipated to forage within the project area. Leatherback sea turtle nesting has been documented in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties but not within the project area. Nesting habitat at the project area is marginal due to the extensive stabilization of the shoreline with vertical seawalls and rip-rap.

**EFH Species**

Information concerning the potential impacts from construction activity and the protection of EFH species is addressed in the *Essential Fish Habitat Assessment*, which is included with this letter. The estuarine habitats in the project area have been identified as EFH for postlarval/juvenile penaeid shrimp, postlarval/juvenile, subadult, and adult red drum, juvenile Spanish and king mackerel, juvenile and adult gray snapper, and juvenile gag grouper by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council under the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Specific EFH categories that may be directly impacted by the project include seagrass, estuarine water column, and mud, sand, shell, and rock substrate. Within the four bridge approach quadrants surveyed, no seagrasses were found. The nearest known seagrasses are within the vicinity of Project GreenShores, which is described thoroughly in Section 5.3 of the *Essential Fish Habitat Assessment*.

Depending on the alternative chosen, direct impacts to wetland EFH are estimated to be less than 0.01 acre (Central East) and 0.07 acre (Central West) of salt marsh and 35.20 acres (Central East with Flyover) and 34.50 acres (Central West with Flyover) of open water. Impacts to EFH have been avoided to the greatest extent possible but due to the nature of the project, both alignments result in unavoidable impacts to EFH. However, these impacts are insignificant because only a small portion of the 20,000 + acres of Pensacola Bay EFH would be impacted, and BMPs could be implemented during construction. Impacts to the seagrass restoration area due to rip-rap placement are possible if the Central West Alternative is selected. During the design phase, seagrasses will be resurveyed and impacts from rip-rap placement will be minimized or avoided.

Continued coordination with the NMFS is anticipated to be adequate for the preparation of formal EFH Conservation Recommendations required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Further consultation will be required during the permitting phase to determine the most effective mitigation measures. The proposed mitigation plan will require close coordination between state and federal agencies to adequately compensate for any unavoidable impacts related to the preferred alternative, in a manner that would result in “no adverse effects” to EFH.

**Commitments**

In order to ensure that adverse impacts to the protected species within the vicinity of the project area will not occur, FDOT will abide by the following commitments which are included in the Environmental Assessment:
Gulf Sturgeon - USFWS and FFWCC approved protection guidelines will be followed during construction to minimize potential impacts to the species. The guidelines include:

- Avoidance of nocturnal pile driving from November through April;
- Avoidance of in-water explosive work from November through April;
- Minimization of multiple pile driving operations so that the maximum distance between the southernmost and northernmost pile driving operation does not exceed one kilometer;
- Avoidance of mooring work barges and vessels in shallow shoreline waters from November through April; and,
- Avoidance and minimization of effects to habitat used for winter feeding.

West Indian manatee - The most current USFWS guidelines “Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work” will be incorporated into the final project design specifications and the construction contractor will be informed of the necessity to follow these guidelines during the construction. The guidelines include restrictions on blasting, monitoring of turbidity barriers, and exclusionary grating on culverts, presence of manatee observers during in-water work, a defined or limited construction window, and no nighttime work. The current guidelines are included in Appendix C of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment. The use of the manatee protection guidelines during construction will also provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

Sea Turtles - Sea turtle nests have not been documented in close proximity to the project area, but nesting has been documented at Perdido Key, Perdido Key State Park, Gulf Island National Seashore, Pensacola Beach, Navarre Beach, Navarre Beach State Park and Eglin Air Force Base. The potential exists, however, for disorientation of hatchlings by the increased luminosity from the proposed bridge lighting in combination with the ambient atmospheric glow from the developed areas of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. This disorientation causes the hatchlings to head away from the Gulf, leaving them exposed to increased predation and ultimately causing an increased rate of mortality. To reduce this potential impact, coordination with USFWS and FFWCC will continue during the design phase in order to incorporate appropriate lighting that meets the needs of traffic safety as well as provides for the enhanced viability of sea turtle hatchlings. The use of the manatee protection guidelines during construction will also provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

EFH - Information concerning the potential impacts from construction activity to target EFH species to protect these species is addressed in the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment for this project. The use of rubblized concrete from the existing bridge for enhancement of sea grass areas or offshore reefs is being explored and will be finalized after discussions with FDEP and District 3.

The FDOT requests your concurrence with the above findings regarding protected species, EFH, and the above-mentioned commitments as described in the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report, or the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment.
If you have any questions about this project, please contact J. Brandon Bruner, P.E., at (850) 330-1509 or via email at joseph.bruner@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

J. Brandon Bruner, P.E.
District Environmental Management Engineer

Enclosure
A teleconference with the Dr. David Rydene of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and RS&H staff was held on Tuesday, August 13, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Informal Consultation request which was recently sent to the NMFS along with the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report and Essential Fish Habitat Assessment. The major topic of discussion was to determine if NMFS has sufficient information to make a determination of effect regarding potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and listed species under jurisdiction of the agency for the Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study.

The following is a synopsis of the items addressed during the meeting and the proposed actions.

1. Dr. David Rydene indicated that he received the package and had reviewed the documents. He plans to provide a written response to the request within a week.
2. Dr. Rydene enquired about stormwater treatment on the bridge. An email message from Paul Heeg was relayed to Dr. Rydene that the plan is to use scuppers at a spacing to be determined by the D/B firm and that no collection system is proposed, as compensatory treatment will be utilized.
3. Dr. Rydene enquired about maintenance of traffic during construction and whether the first of the two new bridges would be sufficient to carry the existing four lanes of traffic during the construction/demolition process of the existing bridge. Jim Mykytka responded that a sufficient number of lanes will be open during this process.
4. Dr. Rydene recommended including an assessment of potential impacts to the small tooth sawfish in our reports. Although this species is not common in the Pensacola Bay, the project area is within the natural range of the species.
5. Dr. Rydene calculates noise impacts of pile driving on marine species based on pile diameter and other factors. To determine impacts, he needs to know approximate...
number and size of piles. In most cases, NMFS recommends that pile driving is ramped up slowly to avoid impacting marine species. Dr. Rydene indicated that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) typically recommends more stringent protection/abatement measures than NMFS with regard to pile driving. RS&H staff agreed to send a follow-up package to NMFS that includes a *Bridge Development Report*, *Bridge Hydraulic Report* and *Report of Geotechnical Investigation*.

6. After Dr. Rydene reviews the potential noise impacts associated with pile driving, he will decide if Informal Consultation will be sufficient.

The teleconference was concluded at approximately 4:00pm.
NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff has reviewed the Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment (WEBAR), and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment Reports created as part of the PD&E Study for the SR 30 (US 98) Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement. NMFS offers the following comments.

NMFS believes that the Wetland Assessment adequately describes the potential wetland impacts for the two alignment alternatives under consideration (i.e. the Central East and Central West alignments). When a final alignment is chosen, appropriate compensatory mitigation will need to be proposed to offset any wetland losses.

It appears that stormwater runoff on the bridge will drain directly into Pensacola Bay via scuppers. Compensatory mitigation should also be proposed to offset the delivery of this degraded water (containing sediment, oil and grease, and other pollutants) to the Pensacola Bay system.

NMFS recommends that a Section 7 consultation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) be conducted for smalltooth sawfish (*Prisits pectinata*), and that a section regarding the species be added to the Threatened and Endangered Species portion of the WEBAR. While smalltooth sawfish are not common in the Florida Panhandle region, they have been documented to occur there. Due to the possibility of smalltooth sawfish and/or sea turtles occurring in the project area during construction activities, NMFS recommends the use of NMFS’ Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions (attached).

Either NMFS or the US Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct a Section 7 consultation for Gulf sturgeon and its designated critical habitat, depending on which federal agency (i.e. Federal Highway Administration, US Army Corps of Engineers, or US Coast Guard) ends up being the lead action agency for the ESA consultation. Because the project area lies within Gulf sturgeon designated critical habitat and the project will result in the loss of some estuarine substrate as habitat, a formal ESA Section 7 consultation will likely be needed. The area is also a migratory pathway for Gulf sturgeon.

In order for NMFS to conduct the necessary analyses for impacts to ESA-listed species, more information regarding construction activities, equipment, and techniques will be needed. This will be particularly true for pile driving activities (see attached). Given the size and number of piles that are proposed to be driven, noise attenuation methods (e.g. dewatered isolation casings, contained bubble curtains) are likely to be needed to prevent harm to ESA-listed species. Monitoring of pile driving noise levels during the test pile driving trials (i.e. measurement of peak pressures, single strike and cumulative sound exposure levels, and root mean square levels) would be helpful in determining what steps will be necessary to protect listed species. Very little information on pile driving noise levels of this magnitude in Florida waters is available, and given the recent increase in proposed Florida bridge replacements (and some new bridges) this information would be extremely useful. Considering that the estimated cost for the bridgereplacement is $415 million dollars, the expense of monitoring noise levels from pile driving is relatively small. NMFS has staff that can provide guidance on noise monitoring.

(One minor editorial note: In the EFH Assessment in section 3.2 where salinities in the Pensacola Bay system are being discussed, it should be 30 parts per thousand, rather than 30 parts per trillion.)

NMFS appreciates the opportunity to comment on the FDOT’s PD&E documents.
Some basic information on the pile driving activity is required to conduct an effects analysis. The basic information required includes:

- the material composition of the piles (steel, concrete, wood, composite);
- the type of pile (e.g., sheet, H, tubular, square, etc.);
- the diameter of the piles;
- the number of piles driven;
- the number of hammer strikes per pile;
- the duration to drive a single pile;
- the number of piles driven per day;
- the time of year of the activity;
- the type of pile driving method (e.g., hydraulic, diesel, vibratory hammer);
- other pile driving methods (e.g., drilling, jetting);
- vessels required;
- the total duration of the project;
- depth, bottom, type, and habitat characteristics; and
- a map of the project area.
SEA TURTLE AND SMALLTOOTH SAWFISH CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS

The permittee shall comply with the following protected species construction conditions:

a. The permittee shall instruct all personnel associated with the project of the potential presence of these species and the need to avoid collisions with sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish. All construction personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of these species.

b. The permittee shall advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing sea turtles or smalltooth sawfish, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

c. Siltation barriers shall be made of material in which a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish cannot become entangled, be properly secured, and be regularly monitored to avoid protected species entrapment. Barriers may not block sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish entry to or exit from designated critical habitat without prior agreement from the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Protected Resources Division, St. Petersburg, Florida.

d. All vessels associated with the construction project shall operate at “no wake/idle” speeds at all times while in the construction area and while in water depths where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will preferentially follow deep-water routes (e.g., marked channels) whenever possible.

e. If a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish is seen within 100 yards of the active daily construction/dredging operation or vessel movement, all appropriate precautions shall be implemented to ensure its protection. These precautions shall include cessation of operation of any moving equipment closer than 50 feet of a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish. Operation of any mechanical construction equipment shall cease immediately if a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish is seen within a 50-ft radius of the equipment. Activities may not resume until the protected species has departed the project area of its own volition.

f. Any collision with and/or injury to a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish shall be reported immediately to the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Protected Resources Division (727-824-5312) and the local authorized sea turtle stranding/rescue organization.

g. Any special construction conditions, required of your specific project, outside these general conditions, if applicable, will be addressed in the primary consultation.

Revised: March 23, 2006
O:\forms\Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions.doc
2.6 United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The USFWS was contacted via teleconference on August 13, 2013 and via letter from FDOT on August 30, 2013. FDOT requested a review of the WEBAR in conjunction with informal Section 7 Consultation under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Subsequently, the USFWS provided a response to FDOT’s request. The letter from FDOT, teleconference minutes, and the USFWS response are included as Exhibits 2.6.1, 2.6.2, and 2.6.3, respectively.

The USFWS response included Construction Special Provisions for Gulf Sturgeon Projection Guidelines as well as Guidelines for Marine Animals During the use of Explosives in the Waters of the State of Florida. These two attachments are included with Exhibit 2.6.3
July 31, 2013

Dr. Don Imm, Project Leader
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Panama City Ecological Services / Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
1601 Balboa Avenue
Panama City, FL 32405

RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties
Financial Project Identification Number: 409334-1-22-02
Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report

Dear Dr. Imm,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 3, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), for the proposed replacement of the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Pensacola Bay Bridge, or “Three-Mile Bridge,” is a 2.96-mile long, 4-lane bridge carrying State Road (SR) 30 [US Highway 98 (US 98)] across Pensacola Bay and connecting downtown Pensacola in Escambia County with the City of Gulf Breeze in Santa Rosa County. The Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study begins just west of the intersection of 17th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway and ends at the intersection of Baybridge Drive and Gulf Breeze Parkway. Both Bayfront Parkway and Gulf Breeze Parkway are designated as SR 30 (US 98) within the study area. The project is located with Townships 2 and 3 South and within Range 29 West.

We carefully reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) System, the 2012 Panhandle Species List, and Mary Mittiga’s comments in the Programming Screen Summary Report (Project #13248- Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement) to develop a list of species and critical habitat that “may be present” within the project area. The attached Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report describes the listed species that may be present within the project area and the assessment of potential impacts associated with the project. As part of the PD&E process, FHWA requires concurrence from USFWS that the proposed project does not adversely affect federally threatened and endangered species. The FDOT would like to initiate Informal Section 7 Consultation under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) versus Formal through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) because specific project design details and construction methods will not be finalized until the design and permitting phase. Formal consultation will be conducted during the permitting phase by the FHWA if necessary.

www.dot.state.fl.us
Project Description

The proposed project involves demolition and replacement of the existing bridge due to the deteriorating conditions, low sufficiency rating, and lack of modern safety features. The FDOT District 3 has assigned replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge as the number one priority within the work program. Funds have been programmed for the bridge replacement, and FDOT has committed to start construction by 2019.

The Central East and Central West build alternatives, are being carried forward for further evaluation in this PD&E study, as explained in the attached reports. Both alternatives include a flyover configuration that would be constructed in the future when traffic volumes increase. The impacts to the natural environment and Pensacola Bay are similar. A maximum of 0.07 acre of tidal salt marsh would be directly impacted by the Central West Alternative. The Central East Alternative impacts less than 0.01 acre of jurisdictional wetlands. This wetland impact is considered insignificant due to the limited acreage involved. Mitigation for any unavoidable wetland impacts is proposed. The north and south landfalls of the Pensacola Bay Bridge are considered developed lands and include recreational, commercial, residential land uses as well as publicly owned lands.

The FDOT will continue to develop avoidance alternatives and/or measures to minimize harm to natural resources during the design phase, in accordance with the agencies comments received during the FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. As part of the FDOT's ETDM Process, project information was distributed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD), USFWS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), NMFS, and other governmental agencies. The responses of these agencies are included in Appendix A of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment. USFWS's principle concerns were impacts to seagrass, the Gulf Sturgeon and its Critical Habitat, the West Indian Manatee, and nesting and in-water sea turtles. These concerns have been addressed by conducting multiple in-water seagrass surveys and FDOT's commitments outlined below. No seagrasses or listed species were observed at the bridge approaches during field reviews.

Protected Species and Habitat

The Gulf sturgeon, Piping Plover, West Indian manatee, and sea turtles (Loggerhead, Green Sea, and Kemp’s Ridley) could potentially be within the project area and could be affected by the project. The project area is designated as Critical Habitat for the Gulf sturgeon. It is also within the Consultation area for the West Indian manatee. Based on the type of project, proposed construction techniques, and the FDOT's commitment to implement standard protection measures, the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” these species or the Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon.

The proposed project is “not likely to adversely affect” the Wood Stork. The USFWS and FFWCC databases revealed no rookeries in close proximity to the project area with the
nearest nest site being located approximately 170 miles to the east near Tallahassee. The proposed project is anticipated to have “no effect” on the leatherback sea turtle. Due to its preference for pelagic habitat, the species is not anticipated to forage within the project area. Leatherback sea turtle nesting has been documented in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties but not within the project area. Nesting habitat at the project area is marginal due to the extensive stabilization of the shoreline with vertical seawalls and rip-rap.

**Commitments**

In order to ensure that adverse impacts to the protected species within the vicinity of the project area will not occur, FDOT will abide by the following commitments which are included in the Environmental Assessment:

**Gulf Sturgeon** - USFWS and FFWCC approved protection guidelines will be followed during construction to minimize potential impacts to the species. The guidelines include:

- Avoidance of nocturnal pile driving from November through April;
- Avoidance of in-water explosive work from November through April;
- Minimization of multiple pile driving operations so that the maximum distance between the southernmost and northernmost pile driving operation does not exceed one kilometer;
- Avoidance of mooring work barges and vessels in shallow shoreline waters from November through April; and,
- Avoidance and minimization of effects to habitat used for winter feeding.

**West Indian Manatee** – The most current USFWS guidelines “Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work” will be incorporated into the final project design specifications and the construction contractor will be informed of the necessity to follow these guidelines during the construction. The guidelines include restrictions on blasting, monitoring of turbidity barriers, and exclusionary grating on culverts, presence of manatee observers during in-water work, a defined or limited construction window, and no nighttime work. The current guidelines are included in Appendix C of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment. The use of the manatee protection guidelines during construction will also provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

**Sea Turtles** - Sea turtle nests have not been documented in close proximity to the project area, but nesting has been documented at Perdido Key, Perdido Key State Park, Gulf Island National Seashore, Pensacola Beach, Navarre Beach, Navarre Beach State Park and Eglin Air Force Base. The potential exists, however, for disorientation of hatchlings by the increased luminosity from the proposed bridge lighting in combination with the ambient atmospheric glow from the developed areas of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. This disorientation causes the hatchlings to head away from the Gulf, leaving them exposed to increased predation and ultimately causing an increased rate of mortality. To reduce this potential impact, coordination with NMFS, USFWS, and FFWCC will continue during the design phase in order to incorporate appropriate lighting that meets the needs of traffic safety as well as provides for the enhanced viability of sea turtle hatchlings. The use of the
manatee protection guidelines during construction will also provide concurrent protection for any sea turtles that may temporarily be passing through the project area.

The FDOT requests your concurrence with the above findings regarding protected species and the above-mentioned commitments as described in the *Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment*.

If you have any questions about this project or the, please contact J. Brandon Bruner, P.E., at (850) 330-1509 or via email at joseph.bruner@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

J. Brandon Bruner, P.E.
District Environmental Management Engineer

Enclosure
A teleconference with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) representatives and RS&H staff was held on Tuesday, August 13, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Informal Consultation request which was recently sent to the USFWS along with the *Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report*. The major topic of discussion was the course of action needed to obtain concurrence from the USFWS regarding potential impacts to federally listed species for the Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study.

The following is a synopsis of the items addressed during the meeting and the proposed actions.

1. Mary and Karen indicated that they are still in the process of reviewing the information provided. They agreed to review our proposed protection measures for the Gulf Sturgeon to confirm that they are applicable to the specific project area. She plans to provide a written response to the informal consultation request by the end of the month.
2. Based on Mary’s recent experience with bridge replacement projects in Gulf Sturgeon Critical Habitat, a Formal Consultation and preparation of a Biological Opinion would likely be required on this project.
3. Mary indicated that Formal Consultation typically occurs after the test piles are driven. If consultation occurs before test piles are driven, USFWS takes a conservative approach.
4. USFWS suggested that coordination be continued through the Informal Consultation. Additional construction details may be needed to determine what conservation measures may be required and if Formal Consultation may be required.
5. Paul Heeg offered to send USFWS a copy of the Bridge Development Report (BDR) which includes a typical pier and footing plan and preliminary span arrangement. Mary indicated that she would prefer electronic copies of any final design plans of the structure. Paul indicated to USFWS that no design plans have been developed to date. The BDR includes a recommended sub- and super-structure configuration. However, the Design-Build team will ultimately design the structure and prepare the final design plans. The current RS&H contract with District 3 includes the development of 60% plans for the bridge approaches on the Pensacola and Gulf Breeze landfalls. However, these 60% plans do not include any structural details. Since no final design plans of the proposed bridge will be available until the Design-Build Phase, an electronic version of the BDR will be sent to USFWS. Electronic versions of the Bridge Hydraulic Report and Geotechnical Investigation Report are also available and include the topographic and geotechnical characteristics of Pensacola Bay.

6. Karen is working on assembling known information on Gulf Sturgeon movements in the vicinity of the Pensacola Bay Bridge and will provide RS&H with a sample Biological Opinion as reference for the information which may be required. According to Mary, the Gulf Sturgeon are known to spawn in the spring and fall and are sensitive to noise disturbances. The fish are present in the bays and estuaries in the Gulf of Mexico.

7. Mary indicated that there is no typical mitigation for Gulf Sturgeon impacts. “Mitigation” can range from requirements to perform sturgeon tracking studies to the use of turbidity curtains during construction. Due to the rapidly deteriorating condition of the existing structure, one concern regarding mitigation measures is the time restrictions on pile driving, since there are an estimated 10 piles per pier to be driven, with typical depths of 60 feet or more. The recommended structural alternative in the BDR includes a total of 214 new piers, equating to 2,140 piles to be driven. The Geotechnical Investigation Report mentions the option of using drilled shafts, which may be considered by the Design-Build team. However, the most likely foundation option is the use of 54- or 60-inch cylinder piles due to the very soft and scourable soils found in the first 50 feet of strata. The project schedule produced at the April 2013 Risk Analysis Workshop includes time restrictions to pile driving using the current WEBAR commitments, which are based on the USFWS EDTM comments. The draft risk analysis projects September 2015 as the Design-Build notice to proceed date and June 2022 as the date of project completion. Seventy-five months are anticipated to complete the project construction.

8. Jim asked Mary to elaborate on what FHWA considers “reasonable assurance” and if FDOT's commitments to implement standard protection measures will provide “reasonable assurance”. Mary indicated that whether or not the protection plan provides “reasonable assurance” is decided on a case by case basis. Mary frequently
works with FHWA to obtain concurrence during the planning stages of a project but the two agencies are still developing a specific protocol/process regarding proving reasonable assurances during PD&E studies. Mary plans to discuss the appropriate “reasonable assurance” language with FHWA to allow the project to move forward.

9. Mary stated that FHWA and USFWS prefer to identify environmental issues as early as possible to facilitate the consultation process. She acknowledged that once the Design-Build process is initiated, the schedule is accelerated and may not be conducive to resolving environmental concerns. She encouraged the project team to continue the interagency dialogue now in order to minimize delays later.

10. The Formal Consultation process may take as long as 135 days.

The teleconference was concluded at approximately 4:00pm.
Exhibit 2.6.3: 2013-08-30 USFWS Letter to FDOT

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Field Office
1601 Balboa Avenue
Panama City, FL 32405-3721

Tel: (850) 769-0552
Fax: (850) 763-2177

August 30, 2013

Mr. Brandon Bruner
District Environmental Management Engineer
District 3
Florida Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 607
Chipley, Florida 32428-0607

Re: FWS No. 2013-I-0264
Florida Department of Transportation
Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study
FPIID No. 409334-1-22-02
Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida

Dear Mr. Bruner:

Thank you for your letter dated July 31, 2013, and for providing the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) completed for the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for the above-referenced project. You have requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provide concurrence with your effect determinations for species protected under the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). This response is provided in accordance with provisions of the Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposes to replace and upgrade the 2.96-mile US 98 Pensacola Bay bridge with two parallel bridges and a six-lane traffic capacity. The existing structure will be removed. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has approved the Central Corridor as the preferred corridor as recommended by FDOT. Two alignment alternatives are under consideration: Central East and Central West. The proposed bridge typical section for each span consists of three 12-foot lanes, two 10-foot shoulders, and a 12-foot shared use path. The Bridge Development Report reviewed several alternative bridge designs and recommended that Alternative 3 be carried to final design. This alternative will use 60-inch diameter pile installed by driving. Approximately 993 piles will be installed per bridge. This project is expected to take approximately 7 years from the letting of the contract to completion.
Wetlands Evaluation

The WEBAR indicates that several surveys were conducted and no seagrasses were found within the current alternative alignments. As Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (FDEP) GIS map of seagrasses based on photo interpretation inaccurately showed seagrass areas near the bridge approaches, we suggest that you provide your survey data to FDEP so that the error can be corrected in future map revisions.

Wetland impacts are expected to tidal marsh as a result of the project, with a maximum of 0.07 acres directly impacted by the Central West Alternative and less than 0.01 acre by the Central East Alternative. The Service recommends that wetland losses be avoided and minimized to the extent practicable. Unavoidable losses should be offset in-kind. As no mitigation banks in the project watershed provide in-kind estuarine credits, the FDOT is assessing options such as contributing to Project GreenShores, on-site mitigation, and off-site mitigation. All appear to be reasonable options to offset wetland losses. The Service is available to provide technical assistance as FDOT continues to evaluate wetland effects and mitigation options.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Gulf sturgeon
You have determined that with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures¹, the proposed work may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Gulf sturgeon. The Service cannot concur with this determination. Recent studies indicate that sturgeon are present in the project area in moderate to high numbers from September 1 to June 1 as they migrate during fall and spring, and overwinter in Pensacola Bay and Santa Rosa Sound (Duncan et al. 2011, Reed 2011). The area is also designated as Gulf sturgeon Critical Habitat Unit 9 Pensacola Bay. For bridge construction projects in waters occupied by Gulf sturgeon, the Service is increasingly concerned about the potential detrimental effects to sturgeon from sound waves and vibration during pile driving activities, especially for the large number and size of pilings and the extensive work period proposed.

Additional information is needed to assess the effects of pile driving on Gulf sturgeon. Data is needed on the expected sound levels that will be generated based on the equipment, substrate, and method of pile installation being proposed. This data could be gathered by monitoring sound during pile testing. The sound assessment should provide information on the peak pressure, cumulative sound exposure level, and root mean square sound pressure in a manner that can be compared to the Fisheries Hydroacoustic Working Group’s Interim Criteria for Injury (2008). To the extent feasible, receptors should be spaced to allow development of a curve showing noise attenuation over space and time. A Practical Spreading Loss model could also be used to determine noise attenuation. If sound reaches levels that may cause behavior changes and/or physical injury – mitigation measures should be implemented to reduce these effects. Data should be provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of mitigation measures. If the effects can’t

¹ Gulf sturgeon construction provisions were updated in 2012. A copy of the revised guideline is enclosed.
be fully avoided, then formal consultation should be initiated to address potential take (harm, harass, kill) of the Gulf sturgeon.

With several upcoming bridge projects in Gulf sturgeon critical habitat units (*i.e.* SR 87 Yellow River bridge, SR 87 Connector Road and new Blackwater River bridge, US 331 Choctawhatchee Bay bridge, and US 98 Pensacola Bay bridge), it is an opportune time to gather much-needed scientific data on the effects of bridge construction activities, such as pile driving and sound propagation, on the Gulf sturgeon at these locations. To date, due to a lack of regional data we have relied heavily on information from the Pacific coast and similar anadromous fish species for our consultations. Data specific to environmental conditions in the southeast and Gulf sturgeon would be very useful to better inform consultations under the Act. We recommend that FHWA and FDOT consider funding a scientific study to collect basic data on sound generation from pile driving and to determine the effects of sound on sturgeon. Much of the infrastructure (*e.g.* receivers, tagged fish, etc.) and scientific expertise to conduct such studies is currently available. If FDOT and FHWA decide to fund a scientific study, it could be included as a conservation measure for this project. We look forward to future discussions on a potential research project.

**Nesting Sea Turtles**
The Service appreciates the FDOT’s commitment to design a “sea turtle-friendly” (*a.k.a.* wildlife friendly) lighting plan that would reduce the cumulative sky glow that is potentially harmful to sea turtles on nearby nesting beaches. We request that your commitment be slightly modified to indicate that during design the lighting plan be coordinated with the Service for *our approval prior to finalizing the design*. Provided that this change is made, the Service could concur with your determination that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” nesting sea turtles.

**Piping Plover**
The Service concurs with your determination that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” wintering piping plover as no suitable habitat appears to be present.

**Wood Stork**
The Service concurs with your determination that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the wood stork as no known rookeries or suitable habitat appears to be present.

**West Indian Manatee**
With the incorporation of Standard Manatee Construction Conditions, the Service concurs that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the West Indian manatee during bridge construction activities. Little information is provided on the demolition of the existing US 98 bridge. Should explosives be used, we request that the FDOT follow the *Guidelines for the Protection of Marine Animals During the Use of Explosives In the Waters of the State of Florida* (enclosed). Further coordination will be required with the Service if blasting is needed for bridge demolition.
We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and look forward to further coordination on this project. Please contact Ms. Mary Mittiga of this office (ext. 236) if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald W. Imm
Project Leader

Literature Cited:


Enclosures (2):
Gulf Sturgeon Protection Guidelines 2012
Guidelines for the Protection of Marine Animals During the Use of Explosives In the Waters of the State of Florida May 2006 draft

cc:
ACOE, Panama City, FL (Melinda Wittgenstein)
FHWA, Tallahassee, FL (Joe Sullivan)
FWC, Tallahassee, FL (Terry Gilbert)
NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL (Dave Rydene)
CONSTRUCTION SPECIAL PROVISIONS
GULF STURGEON PROTECTION GUIDELINES
(PURSUANT TO NMFS AND USFWS)

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) is listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened. It is managed under the joint jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Potential habitat for the Gulf sturgeon is located within the limits of this project.

The following special provisions will be incorporated into any construction contract where involvement with sturgeon may occur:

The FDOT has coordinated with the NMFS and USFWS early in the project development stage. The following provisions are intended to avoid/protect known spawning habitats, nursery areas, feeding areas and thermal refuges.

1. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) shall advise all FDOT project personnel and Contractor personnel on the project that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing or killing sturgeon. The FDOT and the Contractor will be held responsible for any sturgeon harmed, harassed, or killed as a result of the project activity.

2. The FDOT shall provide information to all FDOT and Contract personnel for identification of sturgeon.

3. Appropriate work shift personnel will be instructed in the appearance, habits, biology, migratory patterns, and preservation of sturgeon. At least one of these trained personnel will be on site during construction activities to maintain a constant surveillance for these species, assure the cessation of activities (such as dredging, excess turbidity, and construction barge activity), which may endanger these species, and assure that uninhibited passage for the animals is provided.

4. Post signs on site warning of the presence of sturgeon, of their endangered status and federal protection, and precautions needed.

5. Turbidity from construction activity will be adequately controlled to prevent degradation of the quality and transparency of the water. When sturgeon are present, turbidity curtains of appropriate dimension will be used to restrict the animals’ access to the work area. Pollution booms or turbidity curtains should use tangle resistant or hemp rope when anchoring, or employ surface anchors' to prevent entangling sturgeon. Continuous surveillance will be maintained in order to free animals which may become trapped in silt or turbidity barriers.

6. No dredging of the river bottom will be conducted for barge access.

September 2012
Guidelines for the Protection of Marine Animals During the Use of Explosives In the Waters of the State of Florida

May 2006 DRAFT
Wright 1982) and sea turtle (O’Keeffe and Young 1984; Duronslet et al. 1986; Klima et al. 1988; Gitschlag and Renaud 1989; Gitschlag 1990; Gitschlag and Herczeg 1994) injury and/or death. Based on the best available scientific information describing the potential for marine mammal and sea turtle injury/death, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), has prepared these guidelines to provide information to project proponents on the conservation and protection of marine mammals and sea turtles from adverse impacts resulting from the use of confined or open-water explosives in Florida’s waters. Within the context of these guidelines, an explosive is defined as a chemical compound which, when detonated, creates a compressional wave having an almost instantaneous rise time to a very high peak pressure followed by a decay to below ambient pressure by either rapid oxidation or the breaking of high-energy chemical bonds.

APPLICABLE FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

These guidelines for the protection of marine mammals and sea turtles, the application and review procedures and processes, and reporting requirements that are outlined in this document apply in the context of the State and Federal legislative authorities briefly summarized below.

The Endangered Species Act
Section 9 (16 U.S.C. 1538) - Prohibited Acts
(a) General
   (1)...it is unlawful for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to-
   (B) take any such species within the United States or the territorial sea of the
   United States;
   (C) take any such species upon the high seas;

Section 3 (16 U.S.C. 1532) - Definitions
(18) The term “take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act
Section 102 (16 U.S.C. 1372) - Prohibitions
(a)...it is unlawful-
   (1)(A) for any person or vessel or other conveyance to take any marine mammal in
   waters or on lands under the jurisdiction of the United States;

Section 3 (16 U.S.C. 1362) - Definitions
(13) The term “take” means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or
kill any marine mammal.
(18)(A) The term “harassment” means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which-
   (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild; or
   (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by
causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including but not limited to, migration, breathing,
nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.
c. Expected type and weight of explosives to be used per shot for production shots and the maximum charge weight per interval of 25 milliseconds (preferred). Sequentially list every charges’ total delay time in increasing time order. Any charge weights with less than 9-milliseconds interval are summed to find the maximum charge weight per delay.

d. Blast pattern and geometry of the individual shots for a small project or of a general blast production for a large blasting program. Test program to develop from small charges to the maximum charge weight per delay interval necessary for production. The expected production charge weight per delay, spacing and burden between borings, placement of explosives within borings, stemming type and minimum length of stemming placement within the structure (note 3.e. below), and the location of the initiator within the boring. [A small project (e.g., bridge demolition) will have a limited blasting plan, perhaps completely prepared. A large program (e.g., harbor rock removal) will have a general blasting program that varies through the project. A program may be needed to scale the first charge weight per delay to the maximum charge weight per delay for the project.]

e. Description of millisecond-delays that will be used if multiple charges are required.

f. Detailed description of the material to be blasted (i.e., substrata characteristics, description of concrete and reinforcement, etc.) and surrounding geology (water depth, water width, sediment thickness, rock or structure being removed, etc.).

g. Detailed description of control measures that will be employed to assure that hole spacing, burden, hole depth, charge placement, delay interval, the stemming minimum, and recording of the shot have met the conditions of the permit and submitted plan.

2. Impact Assessment

The project proponent shall provide a “detailed” Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed blasting project. At a minimum, the following information must be included:

a. The likelihood of sea turtles and marine mammals being in the blasting area. The proponent shall consult existing scientific literature and the FWC and/or other resource agencies. Pre-blast marine mammal/sea turtle surveys may be required, at the discretion of the FWC, USFWS, NMFS, or other reviewing/permitting agencies.

b. A description of the marine mammal/sea turtle “exclusion zone” that will be developed and used for underwater blasting programs to provide species’ protection. The preferred minimum exclusion zone radius or range from which to protect marine mammal/sea turtles is 500 linear feet beyond the perimeter of placed blasting agents for a shot. The preferred maximum exclusion zone is a 2,000-foot radius beyond the blast perimeter for a submerged shot. An additional 500 feet should be added to the calculated radius or exclusion zone in order to adequately control animals being precluded from this area. When underwater blasting will be conducted in a very controlled manner for a protracted period of months and has acceptable project monitoring, the project proponent may apply to the FWC and other appropriate...
linear feet applies. The maximum charge weight per delay of an open-water shot shall not exceed 450 pounds for the exclusion-zone criterion beneath the waters of the State of Florida, because the exclusion zone radius would be greater than 2,000 linear feet. The equation for the confined blasting exclusion zone radius, \( EZ_c \), for maximum charge weights per delay between 1.5 to 450 pounds is:

\[
EZ_{ow} \text{ (feet)} = (520 \ w^{1/3}) + 500 \text{ feet}
\]

Where \( w \) is the maximum charge weight (in pounds) per delay of an individual confined shot.

c. A record of the type of underwater blasting (open-water or confined), procedures to reduce impacts, calculations of blast parameters, actual placement of explosive agents, organism exclusion zone distance calculations, and plans for observation shall be filed on-site before every shot is fired. Records for each shot of the blasting program shall be retained by the project proponent for the duration of project and made available to the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS immediately onsite or within two business days to the specified mailing address, as requested.

The following records shall be kept for each placement position or boring: (1) - the upper and lower bounds of cemented or consolidated material to be removed or blasted; (2) - the weight of blasting agents and explosives, and their upper and lower bounds; (3) - stemming material appropriate for the size of the borehole; and (4) - upper and lower bounds of the stemming placement within the cemented or consolidated material (usually rock or concrete). The record shall include the sequence of delays from the shortest to longest individual delay time with the total weight of blasting agent at that delay time. The record keeping shall provide enough detail to allow interpretation of the quality of shooting and level of compliance with the Blasting Plan.

d. A description of the monitoring program shall be implemented to record particle velocities when a blasting position is within 1,000 feet of a land-based location. Particle velocity monitoring independently confirms proper shot performance without the cost and difficulty of either pressure-wave recording or organism testing. Reports of particle velocity monitoring should be available to the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS, if requested, on the third business day following the shot.

e. Quantitative evaluation of potential marine mammal/sea turtle (i.e., manatee feeding areas, etc.) habitat that will be destroyed by the blasting project.

3. Mitigation Plan

The project proponent shall prepare a Mitigation Plan that shall include a detailed discussion of the measures employed to avoid or minimize the adverse impacts of blasting. Keevin (1998) provides a general description of mitigation techniques that may be useful to explosives engineers. The following measures shall be included in the Mitigation Plan:
include the Explosives Engineer, the observation team, FWC, USFWS, NMFS, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other interested parties. The agenda shall be coordinated with the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS prior to the meeting. The meeting shall include the latest information concerning the possible presence of manatee, other marine mammals, and sea turtles during blasting, the logistics of the detonation schedule, details of the aerial survey, the communications plan, and the responsibilities of all parties involved.

b. The WP shall include time tables for the endangered species observation periods (e.g., start times for aerial surveys, boat surveys, and land-based surveys), observer positions, and a copy of the WP log sheet and map to record manatee and/or sea turtle sightings.

c. The WP shall include a list of names and qualifications of the observers. Approval of the observers is at the discretion of the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS and will be made prior to the blasting event.

d. The watch crew shall consist of a minimum of a WP Coordinator, four land or boat-based observers, and one aerial observer. All observers shall have had previous experiences in observing/spotting marine mammals and sea turtles or be approved by the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS. The aerial observer shall have a minimum of 30 aerial hours of experience observing sea turtles and marine mammals, a large number of which was flying aerial surveys as a secondary observer during blasting events.

e. Observers shall follow the protocol established for the WP and shall conduct the watch in good faith and to the best of their ability.

f. Each observer shall be equipped with a two-way radio that will be dedicated exclusively to the watch. Observers will be equipped with a cell phone as a backup verbal communications system. Observers shall also be equipped with polarized sunglasses, binoculars, a red flag for backup visual communication, and a sighting log with a map to record sightings.

g. All blasting events shall be weather dependent. Climatic conditions must be suitable for optimal viewing. Slack water, low tide provides optimal viewing conditions. Blasting is prohibited if wind speeds are in excess of 10 knots, during periods of fog and heavy rain. The WP Coordinator shall determine if optimal observation conditions occur prior to initiation of the survey for each blast event.

h. All blasting events shall occur during daylight hours to ensure that optimal observation conditions occur.

i. A continuous aerial survey shall be conducted by helicopter or airplane, beginning one hour prior to the start of blasting. The survey route shall be designed in conjunction with the FWC, USFWS, and NMFS. After detonation, the aerial survey crew will make a complete survey of the blast area. The aerial survey crew shall continue surveillance of the survey areas for 30 minutes post-blast in case there is a need of aerial tracking of an injured sea turtle or marine mammal.
REFERENCES


Hanson, H. F. 1954. Hair seal control program: Copper River and Bering Sea areas. 1954 Annual Report to Alaska Department of Fisheries (Mimeo). [Cited in Wright 1982]


2.7 Naval Air Station Pensacola

The United States Navy maintains a permanent presence on the west side of Pensacola Bay with Naval Air Station Pensacola. The Naval Air Station was contacted with respect to the main channel configuration. The e-mail received from Ms. Stephanie Oram, shown in Exhibit 2.7.1, contains the Navy’s comment regarding the proposed horizontal and vertical dimensions of the main channel.
Mr. Arnio,

Thank you for the information you provided regarding the replacement of the 3-mile bridge. From the dimensions you provided, we do not anticipate any issues or impact to our mission at NAS Pensacola.

A couple of questions I do have at this time are: Do you have a timeframe when the replacement will take place? And will there be any interference to water-traffic flow under the bridge during the construction phase?

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me.

Warm regards,
Stephanie

Stephanie S. Oram
NAS Pensacola
Deputy Air Operations Officer
Acting Community Planner and Liaison Officer
Office: (850)452-2547
Fax: (850)452-2512
Cell: (850)449-8474

-----Original Message-----
From: Arnio, Nicholi [mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 05, 2013 1:14 PM
To: NASP PAO Web Page
Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Study

Good afternoon,

I am writing to get input from Naval Air Station Pensacola regarding the replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is planning to replace the "3 Mile Bridge" as the existing structure has met its service life. The FDOT is currently planning to erect a replacement bridge with a 65 foot vertical clearance over the existing channel. Horizontal clearance through the channel is proposed at 150 feet.

The FDOT wants to ensure that the future needs of Naval Air Station Pensacola will be met with the replacement bridge and would appreciate your comments regarding these proposed clearances.
If you have questions or would like to discuss the bridge replacement study in further detail, please contact me at 850-558-2813.

Regards,

Nick Arnio
RS&H Deputy Project Manager

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061 Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com <mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com>

Visit our website at www.rsandh.com
Connect with RS&H on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WeAreRSandH> Twitter <https://twitter.com/wearerstandh> LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/rs%26h>
LOGO: Improving Your World
3.0 Local Government Coordination

Coordination with local governments has included meetings and correspondence between District 3 and the cities of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze.

3.1 Coordination with the City of Pensacola

The City of Pensacola has offered an alternative treatment for the proposed roadway on the Pensacola land fall. The following exhibits contain correspondence and graphics regarding the concepts from Vision Pensacola, a group tasked by the mayor to provide suggestions regarding the enhancement of the Pensacola landfall.

- Exhibit 3.1.1: 2012-10-11 E-mail from Jerry Pate (3 pages)
- Exhibit 3.1.2: 2012-11-28_E-mail from Rita Lee (2 pages)
- Exhibit 3.1.3: 2012-11-29_Letter from Jerry Pate (1 page)
- Exhibit 3.1.4: 2013_03_20_Vision Pensacola Concept (1 page)
- Exhibit 3.1.5: 2013-01-25_Vision Pensacola Concept (1 page)

Vision Pensacola, on behalf of the City of Pensacola, has expressed the desire to incorporate an elevated roadway from the bridge terminus to Gregory Street. In addition, the City has explored options to incorporate a roundabout at the 17th Avenue intersection. The City would like to keep the Bay viewshed unobstructed and allow for pedestrian and park activities south of US 98 adjacent to the 17th Avenue intersection.
Arnio, Nicholi

From: Steve Dana <SDana@jerrypate.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 1:52 PM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Cc: Jerry Pate; joseph.Bruner@dot.state.fl.us
Subject: RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge
Attachments: bridge at Pensacola_Oct112012.pdf

Nicholi--Attached is a sketch of the concept that Mr. Pate described in his email. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions. Thank you.

Steve Dana
Senior Design Associate

Jerry Pate Design, Inc.
301 Schubert Drive
Pensacola, FL 32504
850-479-4653 office
850-393-6760 cell

-----Original Message-----
From: Arnio, Nicholi [mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 10:28 AM
To: Jerry Pate
Cc: Steve Dana; Joseph.Bruner@dot.state.fl.us; Kristoff, Dan
Subject: RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge

Mr. Pate,
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record. We look forward to seeing you at the Meeting next Thursday.

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061 mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com -----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Pate [mailto:JPate@jerrypate.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2012 8:28 PM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Cc: Steve Dana
Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge

I really like the progress and the corridor locations for the bridge. Please consider a design that makes the 17th ave exit ramp on the North side a one way beyond the railroad tracks. 14th ave can be one way south of the railroad tracks. There would be an overpass or underpass (depending upon grades) from Bayfront to 17th going north thus eliminating a costly overpass on 17th going south to adjoin the south lane on the bridge. There would be no traffic light at 17th.
When will the conceptual toll booths design become a part of the design phase? Is it not perceived by US DOT that tolling is a likely funding source for the bridge? I look forward to discussing these issues. Respectfully, Jerry Pate

Sent from my iPhone

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This electronic mail transmission is intended only for use by the addressee(s) named herein and may contain information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary. Distribution to anyone other than the addressee is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, you are not authorized to read, print, retain, copy or disseminate this message, any part of it, or any attachments. If you have received this message in error, please permanently delete this message and any attachments without reading the content and notify the sender immediately of the inadvertent transmission.
All,

Please find a digital copy of the rendering that was discussed during our meeting. We enjoyed meeting with you and the opportunity to share and explore critical concerns about this valuable project for our community. Thank you for your immediate and utmost attention to our conversation. We look forward to hearing back from you at your earliest opportunity.

Best regards,

Rita R. Lee
Executive Assistant to the Mayor
(850) 435-1696

City of Pensacola
222 W Main St.
Pensacola FL 32502

For Non-Emergency Citizen Requests, Dial 311 or visit Pensacola311.com

Notice: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state and local officials regarding government business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may be subject to public disclosure.
November 29, 2012

Mr. Nick Arnio  
RS&H  
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101  
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Dear Nick:

Thank you for visiting Pensacola this week to meet with Mayor Hayward and his representatives to discuss the Pensacola Bay Bridge project development. It was a pleasure discussing ideas and concepts about the bridge and its impact on the Pensacola area.

Mayor Hayward knows this project is perhaps the largest project in Pensacola’s history and certainly in our lifetime. He has asked me to volunteer my time and resources to assist in this endeavor. We are passionate about making this bridge an aesthetically striking and iconic feature of our waterfront. In addition, we desire to plan its landing in such a way that allows the city the opportunity to improve the area’s vehicular circulation and to enhance the adjacent bay walk and parkland amenities. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you and your team as we move forward together on this important project.

Again, thank you for devoting your time, expertise, and talents to Pensacola.

Sincerely,

JERRY PATE

JP/Js
3.2 Coordination with the City of Gulf Breeze

The District has attended several meetings with the City of Gulf Breeze, and coordination has been ongoing. On October 18, 2012, the City of Gulf Breeze provided a letter (shown in Exhibit 3.2.1) describing a preference for the Central East Alternative. Concept Plans 1 and 2, shown in Exhibits 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, were included with the letter. In April of 2013, a Sketch Up file concept was provided to District 3 and is shown in Exhibit 3.2.1.

The City of Gulf Breeze has expressed concerns regarding impacts to existing businesses and potentially reducing the city tax base. Meetings with the City of Gulf Breeze officials were held on February 2, 2011, January 26, 2012, and April 24, 2013. In the letter dated October 18, 2012, the City of Gulf Breeze explained that they are developing a master plan for the City. As part of the master plan, the City has a set of concepts concerning the bridge landing prepared for FDOT consideration. Additional key points in the letter included the following statements by Gulf Breeze:

1. We prefer the east central alignment.

2. We believe the area available under the bridge should be utilized to mitigate the negative socio-economic and cultural aspects of the expanded bridge. We have included a pedestrian underpass and parking under the new bridge along with a vehicular underpass at the north end.

3. The median which is shown at 33 feet in width at immediate landfall should taper down to a width of 22' at the point the retained area returns to grade.

We request a transfer of ownership of any existing property outside the new bridge footprint for mitigation of storm water and negative impacts of the new facility on Section 4(f) facilities.
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

October 18, 2012

J. Brandon Bruner, P.E.
District Environmental Management Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
1074 Highway 90
Chipley, FL 32428

Dear Brandon,

Thank you for your invitation to the October 18, 2012 public information meeting regarding the Pensacola Bay Bridge Project Development and Environment Study. We wanted to provide you with some feedback in writing in case the process tonight becomes unwieldy.

The City of Gulf Breeze has retained VHB Miller Sellen to help us develop a master plan for the City which will help assure our citizens, business owners and visitors that the City will continue to see traffic levels of service as exist today for the next 50 years and that we can continue to be successful in attracting new business to our City.

A series of workshops have been held and will continue on this project. We have a set of concepts concerning the bridge landing prepared for your consideration. Attached please find a memo to me from VHB which explains these concepts. The illustrations help explain the concepts in more detail.

Please note several key points in the memo:

1. We prefer the east central alignment.
2. We believe the area available under the bridge should be utilized to mitigate the negative socio-economic and cultural aspects of the expanded bridge. We have included a pedestrian underpass and parking under the new bridge along with a vehicular underpass at the north end.
3. The median which is shown at 33 feet in width at immediate landfall should taper down to a width of 22’ at the point the retained area returns to grade.
4. We request a transfer of ownership of any existing property outside the new bridge footprint for mitigation of storm water and negative impacts of the new facility on 4f facilities.

We would be happy to arrange a meeting on conference call with the VHB Miller Sellen team if further explanation is needed.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and the attached memo.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Edwin A. Eddy
City Manager

EAE:lg

Cc: Mayor and City Council
    Matt Dannheisser, City Attorney
    VHB Miller Sellen
    Master Plan Steering Committee
Memorandum

To: Mr. Edwin “Buz” Eddy
1070 Shoreline Dr.
Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

Date: October 15, 2012

Project No.: 61691.00

From: Geoff McNeill

Re: Pensacola Bay Bridge

Dear Buz:

VHB-MS has prepared this memo to describe key points for consideration during discussions with the Florida Department of Transportation. It is important that the City’s interests be stated prior to the completion of the Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E study.

Per the direction of the City of Gulf Breeze Master Plan Steering Committee, we have prepared the following two concepts that maintain and enhance the existing public recreational access at Wayside Park while maximizing the development potential ("highest and best use") for privately-owned parcels.

Points for Consideration of Central-East Alignment of Pensacola Bay Bridge (Concept #1)

A. Maintain ROW same width of bridge; 154 feet until retaining wall and filled portions of landing then reduce median width to 22 feet for a total ROW width of 164’ (width varies depending on exact location).

B. Provide ten (10) foot temporary construction easements on either side of retaining wall portion of bridge landing.

C. Move full access median north to create access to east and west side parcels; include potential for traffic signalization.

D. Provide pedestrian underpass as southern end of bridge approach, to be accommodated within retaining wall portion of the bridge landing.

E. Provide vehicular underpass (to accommodate truck and boat trailers – assumed 14 foot 6 inches high within retaining wall area of bridge landing because FDOT bridge structure, as shown on FDOT information, would not allow clearance for trucks and boat trailers)

F. Request FDOT to transfer ownership of existing FDOT property outside of new bridge/98 right of way to City of Gulf Breeze for mitigation of stormwater and 4(f) impacts (Per the
## EAST SIDE OF GULF BREEZE PARKWAY

Existing Parking Space  28  
Proposed Parking Spaces  56  
Additional Parking Spaces  28  

## WEST SIDE OF GULF BREEZE PARKWAY & PARKING GARAGE

### NORTH PARCEL - PARK

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<th>SQ. FT. / DU's</th>
<th>Req. Parking</th>
<th>Actual Parking</th>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Building</td>
<td>60 x 60</td>
<td>3,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking Below Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,600</strong></td>
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### CENTRAL PARCEL - MIXED USE BUILDING

#### Ground Level

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<th>SQ. FT. / DU's</th>
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<td>Retail</td>
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<td>Garage Parking</td>
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#### Second Level

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<td>Parking Garage</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### Third Level

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#### Fourth Level

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#### Fifth Level

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CONCEPT 2 - EAST ALIGNMENT

EAST SIDE OF GULF BREEZE PARKWAY
Existing Parking Spaces 28
Proposed Parking Spaces 30
Additional Parking Spaces 2

WEST SIDE OF GULF BREEZE PARKWAY
NORTH PARCEL - PARK

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<td>TOTALS</td>
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CENTRAL PARCEL - MIXED USE BUILDING & PARKING GARAGE

Ground Level
Retail 60 x 380 22,800
Retail 60 x 270 16,200
On-Street Parking
Parking Garage 145
Total 39,000 129 167

Second Level
Office 60 x 380 22,800
Office 60 x 270 16,200
Parking Garage 138
Total 39,000 129 138

Third Level
Office 60 x 380 22,800
Office 60 x 220 13,200
Office 60 x 80 4,800
Parking Garage 147
Total 40,800 135 147

Fourth Level
Office 60 x 380 22,800
Office 110 x 250 27,500
Office 60 x 80 4,800
Parking Garage 147
Total 55,100 182 107

Fifth Level
Office 110 x 250 27,500
Parking Garage
Total 27,500 91 107
In August of 2013, the Gulf Breeze City Council approved a master plan known as the Most Livable City Plan. Exhibit 3.2.5 contains an excerpt of the plan pertaining to the bridge landfall area in Gulf Breeze. The following points are noted on the sheet:

The Catalyst Site is the northern gateway to the City and will welcome visitors from across the Pensacola Bay. Because the land area is limited yet provides for excellent recreational, hotel, office, and retail opportunities, it is very important to proactively plan for this strategic community gathering spot.

Bay Bridge Landing Catalyst Site Recommendations:

- Encourage new hotel and mixed-use development;
- Provide new breakwater to protect boat slips at the marina;
- Provide vehicle and pedestrian access and parking beneath the new Pensacolay Bay Bridge to connect parks and businesses on the east side and west sides of US 98;
- Negotiate with the Florida Department of Transportation to shift the proposed bridge alignment centerline 10 feet to the east and reduce the typical median from 30 to 25 feet. This will allow for larger commercial parcels on the west side of US 98; and,
- No surface stormwater management ponds should occupy this area;
5. How Do We Get There?

This Catalyst Site is the northern gateway to the City, and will be the welcome visitors from across the Pensacola Bay. Because the land area is limited, yet provides for excellent recreational, hotel, office and retail opportunities, it is very important to proactively plan for this strategic community gathering spot.

Bay Bridge Landing Catalyst Site Recommendations:

- Encourage New Hotel and Mixed Use Development
- Provide New Breakwater to protect boat slips at the marina
- Provide vehicle and pedestrian access and parking beneath the new Pensacola Bay Bridge to connect parks and businesses on the east and west sides of US-98.
- Negotiate with the Florida Department of Transportation to shift the proposed bridge alignment centerline 10-feet to the east and reduce the typical median from 30 to 25 feet. This will allow for larger commercial parcels on the west side of US-98.
- No surface stormwater management ponds should occupy this area.

Town Center Catalyst Site
4.0 Meetings & Correspondence with Local Entities

This section documents meetings with local organizations, including the series of kick-off meetings in the spring of 2011, a meeting with the United Peninsula Association in the summer of 2011, and meetings with the Florida-Alabama TPO, the City of Gulf Breeze, and the City of Pensacola. Minutes of a meeting with an owner of commercial property in Gulf Breeze are also included.

In addition, correspondence regarding the horizontal and vertical clearance for the proposed Pensacola Bay Bridge is included in this chapter. Various groups with marine interests in Pensacola Bay were contacted. E-mails and letters are documented in Section 4.9.

4.1 Project Kick-off Meetings (April 15-28, 2011)

As a result of the Advanced Notification (AN) process and to ensure that the local municipalities had an understanding of the scope of this project, kickoff meetings were held with the City of Gulf Breeze, the City of Pensacola, Santa Rosa County, and with the Florida-Alabama TPO. Since Escambia County officials were present at the TPO presentation Escambia County declined to have a separate presentation.

Since the above meetings were regularly scheduled meetings of each agency, a list of attendees is not available for the record. The meeting information consisted of an overview of the PD&E process, project limits, purpose of the study, identification of potential Section 4(f) properties, The Meeting dates and locations are provided in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kick-off Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>FL-AL TPO Kick-off</td>
<td>April 15, 2011</td>
<td>Escambia County Commission Chambers</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Pensacola Kick-off</td>
<td>April 18, 2011</td>
<td>City of Pensacola City Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Gulf Breeze Kick-off</td>
<td>April 27, 2011</td>
<td>City of Gulf Breeze City Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County Kick-off</td>
<td>April 28, 2011</td>
<td>County Commissioner’s Board Room</td>
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As a result of the City and County kick-off meetings, the United Peninsula Association requested the Project Team’s attendance at the June 6, 2011 meeting to provide the Association Members with an understanding of the project.
4.2 Meeting with United Peninsula Association, Gulf Breeze (June 6, 2011)

The Project Team met with the United Peninsula Association to discuss the project limits, purpose of the project, and appropriate times within the study schedule to provide public comments, along with the proposed schedule for the project.

Key issues brought to the attention of the Study Team included investigation of an elevated roadway from the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge to east of Naval Live Oaks. Members present voiced concerns that the at-grade 6-lane roadway through Gulf Breeze was not advantageous to motorists and made pedestrian and bicycle travel difficult. The option to re-align the bridge with a landfall in the Naval Live Oaks was also recommended. The Study Team reviewed the limits of the bridge replacement study and explained that the bridge replacement funds could not be applied to the traffic operational improvements that may occur within the City of Gulf Breeze.

4.3 Meeting with Florida-Alabama TPO – Technical Coordination Committee, Gulf Breeze (February 23, 2012)

The Study Team attended the Technical Coordination Committee Meeting of the Florida-Alabama TPO on February 23, 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to update the Technical Coordination Committee on the progress of the project. An overview of the PD&E process, the study limits, the status of the project within the Corridor Analysis phase, and the major concerns in the corridor evaluation process. The presentation depicted possible alternatives within the three corridors, the need for additional capacity, i.e., 6-laning the replacement bridge, and an explanation of the USDOT Section 4(f) requirements.

A sign-in sheet was not available for this meeting. Public comment forms were distributed and 23 comment forms were received as a result of this meeting. Additionally, a public comment period was allowed for those who wished to express concerns verbally to the Technical Coordination Committee and the Study Team. A brief summary of questions and concerns expressed by those affiliated with the TPO Technical Coordination Committee and the public comments collected is listed below. Responses were not provided to specific public comments at this meeting.

- The University of West Florida has been conducting underwater studies on the Pensacola side of the bay and a replacement bridge may impact historic artifacts. If a toll is implemented, consider a reduced amount for frequent users;
- A toll imposed on the bridge would do great damage to the daily drivers and citizens of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze as these cities are so well connected. A property tax or sales tax would be preferred;
- The bridge should be tolled if additional funding is required. If a toll is not acceptable, the bridge should be closed;
- A Study should be conducted to determine the impact of a toll on Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Beach;
The Pensacola Bay Bridge is the only non-tolled north/south route between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. Due to the limited options and the minimal amount of traffic using the Garcon Point Bridge, this replacement bridge should not be tolled; Pedestrians and bicyclists should be safely accommodated on the replacement bridge; The use of “BP Funds” (funds provided by British Petroleum as a result of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon’s oil spill) should be explored to cover the shortfall; A 6-lane bridge was supported; The Central West Corridor was favored.

Again, responses were not provided to specific public comments at this meeting. However, a general statement regarding the potential to toll the bridge was given. FDOT experienced a shortfall in funding and was exploring alternate funding methods.

4.4 Meeting with Florida-Alabama TPO, Pensacola (March 12-14, 2012)

The Study Team attended the Florida-Alabama TPO meeting, the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting, on three consecutive days in March of 2012. An overview of the PD&E process, the study limits, the status of the project within the Corridor Analysis phase, and the major concerns in the corridor evaluation process. The presentation depicted possible alternatives within the three corridors, the need for additional capacity, i.e., 6-laning the replacement bridge, and an explanation of the USDOT Section 4(f) requirements.

A brief summary of questions and concerns expressed by those affiliated with the TPO is listed below. Responses were not provided to specific comments at this meeting.

- Additional funding sources, besides tolls, should be explored to fund the replacement bridge;
- Additional traffic on 17th Avenue will make it even more unsafe for pedestrians;
- Modifications to the bridge typical section should be explored as a cost savings measure;
- Escambia County has recently funded $41 million in State road improvements. This should be taken into consideration when funding sources are explored;
- The money motorists pay into the Transportation Trust Fund should be used for the bridge replacement;
- Is there a history of previously free bridges being tolled?
- Additional piers in the Bay will affect water quality and the natural flushing of the Bay;
- The FDOT should explore options to treat bridge runoff instead of compensatory treatment;
- The bridge deck should be constructed of concrete as opposed to overlaid with asphalt due to the contaminants that would be discharged into the Bay;
- Lighting on the bridge should conform with turtle lighting requirements;
- Mr. Orvin Johnson was recognized at each of the Committee Meetings and the TPO Meeting. Mr. Johnson gave a presentation that detailed improvements to US 98 with project limits from just east of Naval Live Oaks to I-110. His improvements consisted of an elevated roadway through Gulf Breeze, two four-lane bridges (one...
free, one tolled) across Pensacola Bay, and an additional elevated section along Gregory Street to I-110. Interchange locations were proposed at Naval Live Oaks, 17th Avenue, and I-110:

The TPO was pleased with the quality of the presentation and the amount of data that was presented. The TPO adopted Resolution 12-12 Opposing the Use of Toll Facilities on the Pensacola Bay Bridge.

4.5 Meeting with City of Gulf Breeze (November 27, 2012)

City of Gulf Breeze
November 27, 2012
Gulf Breeze, FL

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called by: Mr. Kristoff  Type of meeting: In person

J. Brandon Bruner (FDOT), Blair Martin (FDOT), Jim DeVries (FDOT), Beverly Zimmern (Gulf Breeze Mayor), Edwin “Buz” Eddy (Gulf Breeze City Manager), Attendees: Dave Szymanski (Gulf Breeze), Nancy Model, Craig S. Carmichael (Gulf Breeze Fire Dept.), Ron Pulley (Gulf Breeze Parks), Dan Kristoff (RS&H), Nick Arnio (RS&H), Laurence Lewis (VHB, by phone)

Minutes

Agenda

Introduction / Overview

Mr. Kristoff gave an overview of the project area and the activities that have occurred since the inception of the project in December 2010. The two remaining alternatives were described in detail. The potential impacts caused by Central East and Central West Alternatives were described. Mr. Kristoff explained that the replacement bridge would need to be 10’ to 12’ higher than the existing bridge due to storm surge and wave action. He also explained that the FDOT is looking at extending the bridge on the Gulf Breeze approach to accommodate under bridge parking and ensure adequate access to the boat launch is provided.

Discussion: No action needed for this item.
General Discussion Regarding Central East:

Ms. Model: Have you talked to the business owners & what have they said?

Mr. Kristoff: The primary land owner (Mr. Wheatley) has attended the public meetings and has spoken to a number of our representatives, including me. His preference is to avoid and if not possible, minimize the impacts to his property, especially the additional outdoor seating that has been added to the northwest side of the building closest to the bridge. RS&H has modified the access road to the boat launch area and is able to avoid the outdoor seating area.

Mr. Bruner: Mr. Wheatley has spoken and has met with the FDOT. We are aware of his concerns and interests in the future development of his property. However, it appears that no formal approvals for the proposed development have been received.

Mayor Zimmern: How are we going to provide access to the businesses?

Mr. Kristoff: The businesses will continue to have access to SR 30. The current access shown on both Alternatives being considered is a right-in / right-out situation due to the restricted sight distance that occurs due to the need for guardrail protection for the extended bridge, as well as the distance that would be crossed in order to make a left turn while pulling a trailer and boat across three lanes of traffic. The extended bridge also provides the opportunity for a grade separated crossing of SR 30 through the Wayside Park area. Accesses to individual business and residential properties are not depicted on the drawings during the PD&E phase as they are correlated with the property owner in later phases of the project.

Ms. Martin: Driveways are fully evaluated in the Design Plans. The existing businesses have applied for driveway access through a Driveway Permit and those approved driveway permits will be reviewed in the Design Phase.

Mr. Carmichael: How much parking will be under the bridge and what is the clearance under the bridge? We would also need fire suppression under the bridge as there is not currently a fire hydrant that would service that area.

Mr. Kristoff: The parking configuration is flexible. Central East is currently proposing 8 boat launch spaces and 63 passenger car spaces. Central West shows replacing 18 boat launch spaces and providing an additional 28 passenger car spaces. The clearance is proposed to meet the maximum legal height for non-interstate roadways, which is 14.5’. The legal limit for boat trailer clearance is approximately 13’. The topography in the boat launch area is not exact, but we feel confident we can exceed 14’ of clearance at the main cross driveway location between the east and west land parcels. The fire hydrant issue is noted and will be taken into consideration in the further refinement of the alternatives.

Mr. Pulley: I like the under bridge connection, but want to ensure that there is proper signage “to Pensacola” and “to Gulf Breeze”.

Mayor Zimmern: Will there be under bridge lighting for the parking structure? I think that from a safety standpoint, we need to have adequate lighting, similar to a parking garage.

Ms. Martin: We also need to consider environmentally friendly lighting for Sea Turtles, but yes, lighting will be considered.
Mr. Bruner: Under bridge lighting will be coordinated with appropriate environmental and safety issues and will also be evaluated in conjunction with the decorative bridge lighting that has been shown.

Mr. Bruner: As far as the Alternatives are concerned, we can mitigate the parking, but we cannot mitigate the convenience (Central East eliminates the pavilion side parking)

Ms. Model: What would the speed limit be through Wayside Park?

Mr. Kristoff: As the driveway is to provide access to the parks and is on city property, the City will be responsible for posting the speed limit.

Ms. Model: The new hotel being constructed on the south side of SR 30 may produce more left turns during convention events, what is the proposed queue length for the left turn?

Mr. Kristoff: We are using the existing queue length that exists today. We cannot make it longer because it would encroach into the downstream deceleration lane.

Mr. Eddy: We would like to connect the under bridge parking to the businesses on the west/south side of US 98. This concept is shown in our City Master Plan that we provided to FDOT.

Ms. Martin: If the Master Plan is not adopted by the City we cannot consider modifications that will not meet the access requirements for the current businesses.

Mayor Zimmern: Gulf Breeze has adopted the process to develop a Master Plan, based on the fact that the bridge is coming.

Mr. Eddy: We want to add a service type road to ensure business access can be accommodated.

Ms. Martin: Property owners would need to be in agreement with having the road. FDOT does not have permission to impact private property unless we need it for our roadway. FDOT will work with the City to enhance the bridge approach, but FDOT is charged with minimizing impacts to right-of-way.

Mr. Eddy: FDOT added the Pensacola flyover as soon as they asked for it.

Ms. Martin: The flyover was not recommended by the City of Pensacola. We developed it to improve traffic flow on the western terminus of the bridge. The flyover may also be an opportunity for tolling.

Mr. Eddy: When do you have to have something adopted to consider it?

Mr. Bruner: We need an adopted Master Plan by the Public Hearing, which is currently scheduled for March of 2013.

Ms. Martin: There must also be a legal land deal with the adjacent property owners. In case the existing property owner sells their property, it must be in the deed of transaction that a portion of the land has been donated to FDOT for the service road that is in the Master Plan.

Mayor Zimmern: Is this Gulf Breeze’s responsibility?

Ms. Martin: Yes. You need to provide us with a copy of the adopted Master Plan and you need to show us that you have property owners' buy-in to adding the service road.
Mr. Lewis: The full median opening coming off of the bridge should be consistent with the Master Plan.

Ms. Martin: Median openings can be shifted during final design.

Mr. Eddy: Gulf Breeze wants the FDOT to consider our plans. We want you to help us plan and to mitigate for the economic, social, and cultural impacts due to this bridge widening.

Mr. Pulley: What level of commitment from us do you need to see?

Ms. Martin: In addition to the adopted Master Plan, the property owners will have to sign a letter stating that they want to donate the land to the FDOT for these improvements.

Mr. DeVries: A good example of this is Whisper Pines, where a signal and service road was built.

Mr. Kristoff: The Federal Highway Administration and the FDOT are both required to follow the same guidelines in the acquisition of property for all of the needed right-of-way prior to going to construction.

Mr. Eddy: We can get commitments by March.

Mr. Bruner: The Master Plan is not being ignored. We are considering your plan in our improvements.

Ms. Martin: Property owner rights are very strong.

Mr. Kristoff: The Central East Alternative also requires the removal or relocation of the cinderblock building on Wayside Park East.

Mr. Pulley: That building can be relocated. We would like to have a restroom facility there instead of the storage building.

Discussion Regarding Central West:

Mr. Kristoff described the Central West Alternative and gave an overview of the Wayside Park impacts and additional impacts to the businesses.

Mr. Pulley: What is the elevation of the parking under the bridge and is it the same for both Alternatives?

Mr. Kristoff: The clearance under the bridge is at least 13.5’, which accommodates the legal limit for boat/trailer clearances.

Mr. Eddy: We would like to create a protected area to the southeast foot of the bridge.

Ms. Martin: All right-of-way must be acquired prior to going to the construction phase.

The PD&E is anticipated to be complete in July 2013. The 60% roadway plans and 30% bridge plans will be complete in 2014, which will allow FDOT to acquire right-of-way. The Design-Build contract is anticipated to be advertised in FY 2017.

Mr. Kristoff: The stormwater mitigation will be through various methods of compensatory treatment. Mr. Will Stewart from RS&H has been in contact with representatives.
from Gulf Breeze to identify potential opportunities for compensatory treatment. (Mr. Eddy recalled meeting with Mr. Stewart).

Mr. DeVries: Please ensure that Mr. Eddy gets a copy of the Pond Siting Report. RS&H to provide same.

Ms. Martin: Paving dirt roads could be considered for compensatory treatment.

Mr. Eddy: We would like to consider untreated stormwater or septic tank mitigation. We would also like to consider the removal of the storage building on Wayside Park east in exchange for a restroom facility.

Mr. Kristoff: The replacement of the storage building with other accommodations can be added to the mitigation measures that you would like to have in place.

Mr. Pulley: The existing rip rap was installed by the Corps of Engineers. Are they involved in the project?

Ms. Martin: The COE is a cooperating agency and we have been keeping them involved in the project along with the US Coast Guard.

Mr. Bruner: The construction timeline is estimated at approximately 600 days.

Mr. Eddy: So the bridge would be open in 2019?

Mr. Carmichael: We want to ensure that construction activities are not happening during high traffic events, such as the Blue Angels shows, or 4th of July.

Ms. Martin: We will ensure that the contractor is not planning to work during the high traffic events.

Mr. Kristoff: During construction there will be a need to restrict public access to the park facilities, however we feel that access to the boat launch area can be maintained for emergency service operations.

Mayor Zimmern: What is the FDOT preferred Alternative?

Mr. Bruner: We have to let the impacts speak for themselves. As far as the Central East, there are more Section 4(f) impacts, to the parks and the Escambia County Fishing Bridge. The preferred alternative will be determined based on the impacts on both sides of the bay.

Mayor Zimmern: How are you going to ensure that traffic flows through the City? Your project stops before the traffic gets into town. How can you mitigate for the increase in traffic?

Mr. Bruner: RS&H completed the Access Management Study through Gulf Breeze and proposed improvements, such as median closures, to ensure that traffic continues to flow.

Mr. DeVries: A corridor update was just completed. We are also implementing ITS through Gulf Breeze to enhance signal coordination.

Mr. DeVries: Will the US 98 portion of the project be accepted from the current resurfacing project? I would think so.

Mayor Zimmern: What about tolling?
Mr. Bruner: CDMSmith is doing an investment grade toll study that will take 5 to 6 months. They will be looking at the impacts of a toll and the sensitivity of placing a toll versus the next closest free route. FDOT cannot implement taxes as a mechanism to pay for infrastructure. The only tool FDOT has is to implement tolls. Walton County proposed a tax increase in place of tolling their new bridge.

Mayor Zimmern: What is the status of the toll study on this bridge?

Mr. Bruner: I will get you an update.

Ms. Martin: The FDOT’s first priority is safety. We are also charged with economic stimulus and preservation of the existing system. We will look into your Master Plan and see if we can incorporate the service road. It may be a phased improvement that can happen after the bridge replacement.

Mr. Eddy: We will get the Master Plan adopted by March 2013 and will start coordination with the property owners.

The meeting concluded at 12:00pm CST.

– End Meeting Notes –
Meeting with City of Pensacola (November 27, 2012)

City of Pensacola
November 27, 2012
Pensacola, FL

Meeting Minutes 11-27-2012
1:30 PM Central Time
Pensacola, FL

Meeting called by: Mr. Kristoff Type of meeting: In person

Attendees: J. Brandon Bruner (FDOT), Blair Martin (FDOT), Jim DeVries (FDOT), Ashton Hayward (Pensacola Mayor), Derek Ownes (City Engineer), Rita Lee (Executive Assistant to the Mayor), Jerry Pate (Jerry Pate), Steve Dana (Jerry Pate), Dan Kristoff (RS&H), Nick Arnio (RS&H)

Minutes

Agenda item: Introduction / Overview

Discussion: Mr. Kristoff gave an overview of the project area and the activities that have occurred since the inception of the project in December 2010. The two remaining alternatives were described in detail. The potential impacts caused by Central East and Central West Alternatives were described. Mr. Kristoff explained that the replacement bridge would need to be 10’ to 12’ higher than the existing bridge due to storm surge and wave action. He also explained that the FDOT is looking at an at-grade option and a fly-over option at 17th Avenue.

Conclusions: No action needed for this item.

Agenda item: General Discussion

Discussion Regarding Central East:

Mayor Hayward: Regarding the Santa Rosa County Fishing Bridge, could the County take the $10M and use it for something else?

Ms. Martin: They would have to use it in the same vicinity and the mitigation would have to meet the Federal Highway Section 4(f) regulations.

Mr. Pate: I suggest that we extend the bridge to Gregory Street to provide an elevated movement over 17th Avenue and keep US 98 out of the flood plain. Elevating US 98 westbound traffic would eliminate the westbound movement to Bayfront Drive, which would be a one-way east through the 17th Avenue intersection. Traffic traveling across the bridge moving toward Bayfront would continue on US 98 to Gregory, then turn south on 14th Avenue or 9th Avenue. An additional change would be to convert 17th Avenue into a one-way road for northbound traffic. Forcing all of the westbound traffic onto Gregory would encourage economic development as traffic would be routed by more businesses. 17th Avenue Southbound traffic would
terminate at Belmont, with traffic re-routed along Belmont westbound to either 14th or 9th Avenues. An underpass of the railroad, Gregory and Chase could also be considered.

Mr. Bruner asked if 17th Avenue floods.

Mr. Owens said that the Pensacola approach and under the 17th Avenue CSX bridge regularly floods.

Mr. Pate: Converting 17th Avenue to a one-way and tunneling under the CSX rail at 14th Avenue for southbound traffic would enhance the traffic flow getting off of the bridge.

Mr. Owens: The demand on Gregory has increased over the last two years due to improvements in the downtown area.

Ms. Martin: FDOT would have to partner with the City of Pensacola to convert 17th Avenue to a one-way and the secondary impacts would have to be analyzed. Once the impact to the remaining network was understood, Pensacola would be required to hold Public Meetings and a Public Hearing to inform citizens that this change was going to occur. Ms. Martin said it would take FDOT approximately one month to complete an analysis of the one-way pairs.

**Discussion Regarding Central West:**

Mr. Pate: What would it cost to get an iconic type structure? A central span with some kind of architectural improvements would be aesthetically pleasing. Could that be part of the Design – Build or maybe in a public private partnership? This bridge will be here for the next 50 or 60 years and we should ensure that it is done right.

Ms. Martin: We have included some low-cost aesthetics in the bridge renderings. Bridge lighting can also help to improve the aesthetics of the bridge. The FDOT would definitely need to get buy-in from the locals to include aesthetics that would increase the cost of the bridge.

Mr. Bruner: The project is currently funded as a bridge replacement and improvements that stray from the landfall locations become more difficult to include as part of a bridge replacement effort.

Ms. Martin: The DOT certainly desires to give the recommendations from the city every consideration and is willing to work with local government to meet specific concerns. DOT will have the consultant re-visit the traffic projections and will take a look at the possible traffic implications of the suggested re-routing concepts discussed today.

Mr. Owens: The west side of the Pensacola approach belongs to the FDOT. The City of Pensacola attempted to obtain Federal funds to improve the shoreline after a hurricane and we found out that the Federal Government would not accept our application for that area because it is deeded to the FDOT.
Mr. Kristoff: We know that the DOT owns the parcel. Central West makes lots of sense on the Pensacola Approach because of the minimization of impacts to the Section 4(f) properties. We do impact the Greenshores project more on the Central West, but we feel we can help to mitigate with improvements in other areas of the Bay.

Mr. Owens: What would keep you from going with the Central West Alternative?

Mr., Kristoff: Central West has additional impacts in Gulf Breeze, with respect to the Boat Launch and businesses. Additional mitigation is needed to keep the boat launch functional and we are doing our best to minimize the impact to businesses.

Ms. Martin: In determining whether recommended location for the replacement bridge (west or east) the impacts on both ends of the bridge must be considered as a whole. The collective impacts must be evaluated as an entire set of impacts.

Mayor Hayward: We could work with either Alternative, we just want to get the bridge replaced quickly.

Mr. Pate: We want to ensure that hurricane evacuation needs are met and traffic operations on this approach are efficient after the bridge is replaced.

The meeting concluded at 3:30pm CST.

– End Meeting Notes –
4.7  Meeting with Individual Commercial Property Owner in Gulf Breeze

Throughout the project duration, the FDOT has maintained an ongoing dialogue with the major stakeholders to discuss issues and preferences regarding the alternatives. The FDOT is continuing to work toward a resolving the concerns of the major stakeholders (Pensacola, Gulf Breeze, Escambia County, Gulf Breeze businesses) in order to facilitate the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

The Wheatley development is located on the west side of SR 30 (US 98) at the Gulf Breeze approach. A meeting was held on January 20, 2012 with the property owner to discuss the corridors being considered. The property owner has expressed his desire to improve upon the existing development and prefers the East Corridor to maximize the area for improving his properties. The minutes from the January 20th meeting are below:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 AM Central Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gulf Breeze, FL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting called by:  Mr. Wheatley  Type of meeting: In person

Attendees:  J. Brandon Bruner (FDOT), Colby Cleveland (FDOT), Scott Wheatley (Property Owner), Nick Arnio (RS&H)

Minutes

Agenda item: Wayside Park Status

Discussion: Mr. Wheatley stated that he would like to talk with Gulf Breeze about changing the status of Wayside Park so that it is no longer a designated park. Mr. Bruner stated that FHWA may not accept that as it functions as a park now and has several park-like features, such as pavilions, a small fishing pier, and park benches. Gulf Breeze has also expressed plans to improve the park with a permanent municipal art project and building public restrooms.

Conclusions: No action needed for this item.

Agenda item: Wheatley’s preferred Corridor
Discussion: Mr. Wheatley shared his plans to construct the Promenade at Harbor Breeze development which is a mixed use development on the west side of US 98 near the Pensacola Bay Bridge. The plan would require additional parking requirements due to the residential, commercial and restaurant uses that are planned. Mr. Wheatley’s current plan was completed using the “East” Corridor, which provides the most available land on the west side of US 98.

Conclusions: RS&H will attempt to overlay Wheatley’s current plan on the Central West Corridor.

____________________________________

Agenda item: Plans for Existing Pensacola Bay Bridge

Discussion: Mr. Wheatley stated that he would like to use the existing US 98 bridge as a platform for a solar farm. He stated that it would cost approximately $3 million to fit the existing 3 mile bridge with solar panels. These solar panels would provide up to 15% of the existing power needs for the City of Gulf Breeze. Mr. Bruner stated that the Department would not be willing to continue to provide maintenance on the existing bridge once the new bridge is constructed. If an agreement was in place to assign maintenance to the existing bridge, the Department may be willing to sign the bridge over. Mr. Bruner stated that the structural integrity of the bridge is the main concern. If an eastern alignment is chosen, the existing bridge could break up during hurricanes and damage the new bridge. There is also a concern about the aesthetics of the crossing with the new and old bridges side-by-side.

Conclusions: No action needed at this time.

____________________________________

Agenda Item: Extension of the bridge for additional boat ramp parking
Discussion: Mr. Bruner explained that there is a possibility that the bridge could be extended to provide additional parking for the Wayside Park facilities, including the boat ramp access.
Mr. Wheatley stated that parking for his planned development will be compromised if a western corridor is chosen to move forward. He stated that there may be a possibility that he and the City could share the additional parking provided by extending the bridge.

Conclusions: RS&H will continue working on the extension of the bridge to maximize available parking.

Agenda Item: Entrance to Wheatley property

Discussion: Mr. Wheatley asked if the entrance to the City boat ramp property could be moved to the south/east. The access described would be a shared use access for both the private Wheatley property and the Public boat ramp/Wayside Park property.

Conclusions: RS&H will modify the entrance to the boat ramp as described.

--- End Meeting Notes ---
4.8 Coordination with Baybridge Homeowners Association

Representatives of the Baybridge Homeowners Association on the east side of the Gulf Breeze approach have expressed their support for the Central West Alternative in the Central Corridor or the West Corridor, as these corridors minimize potential impacts to their residential neighborhood. These recommendations were received through email comment correspondence.

4.9 Coordination with Pensacola Bay Maritime Interests

A several local entities were contacted with respect to the proposed horizontal and vertical clearance of the proposed Pensacola Bay Bridge. In addition to coordinating with the USCG and NAS Pensacola (see Chapter 2), the local groups contacted include:

- Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
- Port of Pensacola
- American Waterways Operators
- Pensacola Yacht Club

Exhibits 4.9.1 through 4.9.4 document the correspondence to date.
Mr. Arnio,
After a little more digging and discussion with some of our member companies, GICA supports a 150’ x 65’ span for the replacement bridge. Thanks for reaching out to our industry.

Regards,

Jim Stark
Executive Director, GICA
P.O. Box 6846
New Orleans, LA 70174
901-490-3312
jstark@gicaonline.com
Telephone Record

Date: Tuesday, October 22, 2013  Project No: 108-1141-000

Call To: Nick Arnio  Phone No: 901-490-3312

Call From: Mr. Jim Stark (Intracoastal Canal Association)  Phone No: 850-558-2813

Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E – Bridge Clearance Request

Discussion, Agreement and/or Action:

Mr. Jim Stark phoned Mr. Arnio regarding the current study to replace the Pensacola Bay Bridge. Mr. Stark stated that he had been contacted by Mr. William Lensmeyer of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Associate regarding the proposed bridge clearances for the replacement bridge. Mr. Stark stated that it is standard practice for the GICA to request a horizontal clearance of 225’ and a vertical clearance of 73’ for any new structure being constructed over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW).

Mr. Arnio stated that there are two upstream bridges within close proximity to the replacement bridge location, each of which have clearances of 150’ horizontal and 65’ vertical. If additional clearance were provided for the replacement bridge, access would be limited to the upper Pensacola Bay. Mr. Arnio requested that Mr. Stark provide information regarding the economic benefit to providing access to Upper Pensacola Bay. Additional information that would be helpful in determining bridge clearances would be anticipated vessel type and size as well as frequency of trips.

Mr. Stark stated that he would research the information in more detail and get back with Mr. Arnio.

##
Good morning Mr. Lensmyer,

I am following-up on my email from last May. As the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Project moves forward, we would greatly appreciate your input regarding the proposed clearances. Please let me know if you have any concerns regarding the proposed clearances proposed below. Thank you!

Nick

Hello Mr. Lensmyer,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed clearances for the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Project. As a member of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association, your input is greatly appreciated. Our current proposal includes a 65’ vertical clearance and 150’ horizontal clearance. Would you please contact me to ensure that the needs of the boating community are being met by these clearances?

Thank you for your time.

Nick
Arnio, Nicholi

From: Glenda White <GWhite@cityofpensacola.com>
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2013 3:05 PM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Subject: RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Study

We do not have any concerns.

Thanks,

Glenda White | Manager Operations, Maintenance & Security | Port of Pensacola | an enterprise of the City of Pensacola
700 S. Barracks St | Pensacola, FL 32502 | Work: 850-436-5070 | Cell: 850-426-2531 | gwhite@portofpensacola.com

For Non-Emergency Citizen Requests, Dial 311 or visit Pensacola311.com

---

 Arnio, Nicholi [mailto:Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com]
 Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2013 8:43 AM
 To: Glenda White
 Subject: RE: Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Study

Good morning Ms White,

I am following-up on my email from last May. As the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Project moves forward, we would greatly appreciate your input regarding the proposed clearances. Please let me know if you have any concerns regarding the proposed clearances proposed below. Thank you!

Nick

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE, PMP
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061
Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com

Visit our website at www.rsandh.com
Connect with RS&H on Facebook Twitter LinkedIn
From: Arnio, Nicholi  
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2013 3:59 PM  
To: 'gwhite@portofpensacola.com'  
Subject: Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Study

Good afternoon Ms. White,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed clearances for the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement Project. As a member of the Port of Pensacola, your input is greatly appreciated. Our current proposal includes a 65’ vertical clearance and 150’ horizontal clearance. Would you please contact me to ensure that the needs of the boating community are being met by these clearances?

Thank you for your time.

Nick
Arnio, Nicholi

From: John Harms <jharms@vesselalliance.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 4:14 PM
To: Arnio, Nicholi
Subject: FW: Marine community input on Air Draft of 3mile bridge

Nick,

Please see the email below I sent to AWO members that operate on the west coast of Florida regarding the 3 mile bridge.

John A. Harms
Manager – Atlantic Region
The American Waterways Operators
801 North Quincy Street, Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22203
www.americanwaterways.com
Direct: (703) 373-2292

From: John Harms
Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 4:12 PM
To: Stephen Dann; 'Carlson, Douglas'; Boren Chamber; Rick Watts; Doc Wheeler
Subject: FW: Marine community input on Air Draft of 3mile bridge

Gentlemen,

It was great to see all of you this week. I wanted to alert you to a construction project on the 3 mile bridge in Pensacola, FL. Nick Arnio an engineer on the project, would like input from tug operators on the air draft necessary at that bridge. If your company operates in Pensacola, can you please reach out to him and let me know that you did?

There are no AWO members based in Pensacola and I have not been able to find members that operate there. If you do operate there or know a company that does, please give him a call.

Regards,
John

John A. Harms
Manager – Atlantic Region
The American Waterways Operators
801 North Quincy Street, Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22203
www.americanwaterways.com
Direct: (703) 373-2292

From: Arnio, Nicholi <Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2013 3:29 PM
To: John Harms  
Subject: RE: Marine community input on Air Draft of 3mile bridge

Hey John,

I am writing to follow-up to the phone message I left today regarding the proposed bridge clearance for the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement in Pensacola and Gulf Breeze, Florida. I don’t believe I have been contacted by any of the local AWO members. We want to ensure that we are getting the necessary input to support the Coast Guard bridge permit application. Please give me a call to follow-up on our discussion.

Thanks,
Nick

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE, PMP
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL  32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061
Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com

Visit our website at www.rsandh.com
Connect with RS&H on Facebook Twitter LinkedIn

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.
Dear Nick,

Do you know where I may obtain the following information? If you have leads, regarding such, I would appreciate any help obtaining the information.

Presently, a higher priority for recreational boaters and commercial vessels using the Bayou Chico channel, is the issue of placing the rubble (from the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge) along the south side of the Channel upon dismantling. Through the years, the ancient, existing ballast rock at that location has eroded, and is not visible except for the lowest winter tides. This has created an extreme navigational hazard. Additionally, the wind and wave action erode the beaches on the north side in the Sanders Beach community. Using the rubble for wave attenuation on the south side of the Bayou Chico channel and north-south from the beach to channel marker #10 is a "win-win" for all concerned.

I appreciate your work to improve transportation in NW Florida. Thank you for your consideration on all points above.

Best regards,

Susan McKinnon
On Oct 8, 2013, at 12:58 PM, Arnio, Nicholi wrote:

Good afternoon Ms. McKinnon,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is continuing the study for the 3-Mile bridge replacement. The FDOT is charged with fulfilling the foreseeable needs to future navigation. Based on your previous requests for increased clearances (75 feet vertical and 250 horizontal), the FDOT would like to request supporting information to necessitate the need for the additional clearances. To the best of your ability, would you please provide the following information related to existing boating needs and/or anticipated needs:

- Existing commercial users (marine industrial, passenger cruise and excursion, etc.);
- Existing recreational users;
- Vessel trip frequency;
- Projected changes in waterway usage based upon the additional clearances proposed;
- Impacts to vessel owners that would be precluded from transiting the waterway if the minimum clearances were authorized;
- Type and size of vessels utilizing the waterway to include:
  - Vessel name and registration/documentation numbers
  - Vessel type
  - Vessel owner contact information
  - Primary vessel mooring location (including waterway mile point, if known)
  - Vessel length overall
  - Vessel beam
Please feel free to give me a call to discuss if you would like.

Thank you,
Nick

Nicholi Arnio, PE, PTOE, PMP
Project Manager
1701 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Phone: 850-558-2800 x2813 / Mobile: 850-276-2061
Nicholi.Arnio@rsandh.com

Visit our website at www.rsandh.com

Connect with RS&H on Facebook Twitter LinkedIn

imageaa2d17.gif@b642fe30.e7354dad
Good afternoon Ms. McKinnon,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is continuing the study for the 3-Mile bridge replacement. The FDOT is charged with fulfilling the foreseeable needs to future navigation. Based on your previous requests for increased clearances (75 feet vertical and 250 horizontal), the FDOT would like to request supporting information to necessitate the need for the additional clearances. To the best of your ability, would you please provide the following information related to existing boating needs and/or anticipated needs:

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- Projected changes in waterway usage based upon the additional clearances proposed;
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  - Vessel name and registration/documentation numbers
  - Vessel type
  - Vessel owner contact information
  - Primary vessel mooring location (including waterway mile point, if known)
  - Vessel length overall
  - Vessel beam
  - Vessel draft
  - Vessel air draft

Please feel free to give me a call to discuss if you would like.

Thank you,
Nick
Hi Susan,

It was great to speak with you on the phone this morning. I attempted to put our discussion in a letter format. Please feel free to edit however you see fit, or prepare a letter of your own. The Yacht Club comments are very important to the Florida Department of Transportation and we want to ensure that your concerns are addressed.

Once you feel comfortable with the letter, would you please send a digital copy to Brandon Bruner (Joseph.Bruner@dot.state.fl.us), and cc me? He is the Project Manager for the FDOT. This way, your comments will be included in the record and we can work on the Bayou Chico request.

Thanks and have a great weekend.

Nick
Dear Mr. Bruner,

My name is Susan McKinnon, and I am presently serving as the Commodore of the Pensacola Yacht Club. We are delighted at the prospect of a new Pensacola Bay Bridge, and look forward to its construction. I am attaching a letter for public record concerning same.

After speaking with a large number of boaters, it is our feeling that bridge clearances need to be increased. There are many reasons, from safety considerations to making Escambia and East Bays accessible to a larger number of boaters. At the bridge's current height, these bays are largely closed to all but the fishing public due to clearance restrictions.

We appreciate all efforts to improve our area waterways. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Susan McKinnon  
Commodore  
Pensacola Yacht Club  

Club office (850)433-8804  
Cell (850)450-0703
May 30, 2013

Mr. J. Brandon Bruner
Florida Department of Transportation
1074 Highway 90
Chipley, Florida 32428

Dear Mr. Bruner,

The Pensacola Yacht Club was contacted by RS&H on May 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2013. Proposed clearances for the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement bridge were discussed. The Pensacola Yacht Club feels that the clearances of 75 feet vertically and 250 feet horizontally will meet the immediate and foreseeable clearance requirements of the local boating community regarding the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project. Current projections of 65 feet vertically and 150 feet horizontally are inadequate to meet future needs.

The Pensacola Yacht Club would like to propose that a portion of the bridge remnants be placed just south of the entrance to Bayou Chico. Ballast rock is present below the water surface on the southwest side of the bayou entrance. The ballast rock is submerged during all but extremely low tidal conditions. This obstruction is a hazard to the boating community. The placement of bridge rubble in conjunction with the existing ballast rock would enhance safety for boaters entering Bayou Chico as well as provide wave energy dissipation during storm events. The proposed site is shown below in the figure.

![Diagram showing potential bridge rubble disposal site.]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan McKinnon
5.0 Project Advisory Group Meetings

Project Advisory Group meetings were held on July 26, 2011 and December 6, 2011. The following sections contain the minutes of each meeting.

5.1 Project Advisory Group Meeting Number 1 (July 26, 2011)

PAG Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Representing</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Brown, Jr.</td>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>850-595-3404</td>
<td><a href="mailto:trbrown@co.escambia.fl.us">trbrown@co.escambia.fl.us</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin “Buz” Eddy</td>
<td>City of Gulf Breeze</td>
<td>850-934-5115</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eaeddy@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us">eaeddy@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Bo Robinson</td>
<td>West Fl. Reg. Planning Council</td>
<td>800-226-8914</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mary.robinson@wfrpc.org">Mary.robinson@wfrpc.org</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie Cotti</td>
<td>Gulf Breeze Area Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>850-932-4601</td>
<td><a href="mailto:josie@gulfbreezechamber.com">josie@gulfbreezechamber.com</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita R. Lee</td>
<td>City of Pensacola</td>
<td>850-435-1696</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlee@ci.pensacola.fl.us">rlee@ci.pensacola.fl.us</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Blaylock</td>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>850-981-7100</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rogerb@santarosa.fl.gov">rogerb@santarosa.fl.gov</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Spikes</td>
<td>Pensacola Bay Area Chamber</td>
<td>850-438-4081</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aspikes@pensacolachamber.com">aspikes@pensacolachamber.com</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald S. Richards</td>
<td>United Peninsula Association</td>
<td>404-915-9394</td>
<td><a href="mailto:don-richards@bellsouth.net">don-richards@bellsouth.net</a></td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Hoyt</td>
<td>Private Citizen - Catchin' Fish Show</td>
<td>850-572-6342</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mhw60@cox.net">mhw60@cox.net</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamson</td>
<td>Private Citizen - Bagelheads, Inc.</td>
<td>850-437-5911</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robm@bagelheads.com">robm@bagelheads.com</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Mackay</td>
<td>Private Citizen - Jerry Pate</td>
<td>850-932-8986</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jpare@jerrypate.com">jpare@jerrypate.com</a></td>
<td>Steve Dana filled in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Pate</td>
<td>Private Citizen - Jerry Pate</td>
<td>850-932-8986</td>
<td><a href="mailto:istranahan@jerrypate.com">istranahan@jerrypate.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Papajohn</td>
<td>Gulf Breeze News, Inc.</td>
<td>850-932-8986</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vici@gulfbreezenews.com">vici@gulfbreezenews.com</a></td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FDOT: Brandon Bruner, Howard Hodge, Jim DeVries
RS&H: Dan Kristoff, Nick Arnio, Drew Roark

Notes: This meeting was not recorded by the presenters nor was it transcribed verbatim. These minutes are a general summary of the items discussed.

The meeting began at approximately 6:05 CDT.

- Mr. Bruner welcomed the Project Advisory Group (PAG) Members and began introductions.
- Mr. Kristoff explained the FDOT’s Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process and how the PAG members and members of the public can access information through the ETDM website.
- Mr. Kristoff began the presentation with an introduction to the project and the purpose of the PAG. He made it clear that this was not a decision making body.
- At the completion of the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and concerns.
Question: Mr. Mackay: What do the “project limits” mean?

Response: The project limits are the touchdown points for the replacement bridge. Depending on horizontal and vertical alignments, the bridge replacement construction work should be within a couple hundred feet of the project limits.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: Will the PAG be invited to the Public Workshop?

Response: Yes, the PAG will be invited to all of the public meetings.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: Will notices be placed in the Gulf Breeze News and the Pensacola News Journal for public meetings?

Response: Yes. We will submit announcements to the newspapers at least two weeks prior to the public meetings.

Comment: Papajohn – I would request that the Gulf Breeze News receive three weeks notice for advertisements.

Question: Mr. Eddy: How much higher will the replacement bridge be?

Response: We are unsure right now as we have not completed the vertical profile. My preliminary assessment would be between 8 and 10 feet higher, but I cannot say for sure until we complete the profile grade and perform the storm surge analysis, which will occur in the design alternatives phase.

Question: Mr. Dana: Why do we have a 20-year horizon (2040 Design Year which is 20 years after the projected opening date of 2020) if the bridge will have a life span of 75 years?

Response: Transportation planning horizons are normally 20 years for regional planning activities. The travel demand model we are using for this study has forecasts to the year 2035 and project the remaining 5 years to achieve a horizon year of 2040. The development of a model that forecasts to the year 2095 (Which is 2020 plus the 75 year bridge life) would result in a low level of confidence in the model’s accuracy. What we are asking you to do is to analyze the information that our planning tools provide for the year 2040, but realize that the bridge will be in use for an additional 50 years or so.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: When do you complete the cultural and social analysis? I noticed in the schedule that there is no time allocated to those components of the study, yet you said that you are analyzing them.

Response: The cultural and social aspects of the study are included in the Environmental Analysis which includes both the natural and constructed environments.

Comment: Ms. Robinson: I feel there is a need for a 6-lane capacity today.
Response: There are safety issues that exist on the bridge today. This evening there was a
car stalled on the roadway and it backed up traffic in the westbound direction all
the way into Gulf Breeze. We are currently evaluating the traffic demand and
the number of lanes required to meet the demand.

Comment: Ms. Papajohn: I feel there is an emergency lane needed on the bridge. People
used to ride their bikes on the bridge, but not anymore.

Response: The new bridge would accommodate bicycle and pedestrians, most likely through
a multi-use path.

Comment: Ms. Robinson: When we look at widening the Pensacola Bay Bridge, we need to
look at the values of the surrounding communities. What is the need for capacity
compared to the value of the community?

Response: Evaluating impacts of the build alternatives include the social and
environmental context of the project area.

Question: Mr. Eddy: With a six lane bridge, the bridge would suffice, but the roadways
through Gulf Breeze and Pensacola could not handle the traffic. A second bridge
is planned in the TPO’s Long Range Plan, what does that do for our bridge?

Response: The RS&H Team has not finalized the traffic report to forecast what demand the
bridge will see in the year 2040 and beyond. As far as the second bridge, that
project is in the TPO’s “Needs Plan”, but not the “Cost Feasible” plan. There is
no funding identified for a second crossing of Pensacola Bay.

Question: Mr. Eddy: If I see a 6-lane bridge, that won’t fix traffic problems in Gulf Breeze.

Response: U.S. 98 continues eastward of Gulf Breeze and the roadway needs to be analyzed
from a regional mobility standpoint as well.

Question: Mr. Williams: So there is no moving the existing bridge from where it is now?

Response: Correct. The new bridge will be located within the vicinity of the existing bridge,
this is necessary to qualify for Federal Bridge Replacement Funds. The current
corridors identified are, Left, Right and Center.

Question: Mr. Williams: Will I be able to throw a rock and hit the new bridge?

Response: Yes, it will be within that vicinity.

Question: Mr. Williams: Has there been an Archeological and Historic Study completed?
There are a couple of 1600's shipwrecks located within 400 yards of the existing
bridge.

Response: An Archeological assessment will be completed as part of the study.
Question: Ms. Papajohn: Is it true that U.S. 98 east of Gulf Breeze cannot be widened to 6-lanes because of the Gulf Shores National Sea Shore?

Response: A Study from the (Pensacola) Bay Bridge to Hulbert Field was completed 10 to 12 years ago and found that U.S. 98 could be widened if the widening took place toward the median. Additional impacts outside of the existing right of way/easement would not be permitted. This may not be the case any longer as personnel rotate out of agencies.

Question: Mr. Williams: There are utilities on the west side of the bridge that will have to be addressed.

Response: We understand and will coordinate with the utility companies for any relocations.

Question: Mr. De Vries: When is Project Advisory Group (PAG) Meetings Planned for?

Response: They will be scheduled prior to major decisions being made. Possible dates could be after the Corridors Meeting, prior to the Alternatives Meeting and Prior to the Public Hearing. It is expected that 3 to 4 more PAG meetings will take place.

Question: Ms. Robinson: Could you explain the ETDM process and the Advanced Notification process to everyone a little more?

Response: The ETDM process is an electronic notification system where public agencies can comment on the project effects to the natural and built environment. The Advanced Notification process provided preliminary data such as a geographic information system (GIS) screening of potential effects, project purpose and need for improvements and other introductory information. The ETDM process is open to the public and can be accessed through the project website, www.pensacolabaybridge.com.

Question: Mr. Eddy: What is the disposition of the existing bridge?

Response: FDOT would consider turning it over to local officials if they wanted to accept the responsibility for maintenance and repairs.

Question: Mr. Williams: Have you looked into the impacts to the migration of the Gulf Sturgeon?

Response: An Essential Fish Habitat study will be completed as a part of this study.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Can the replacement bridge be on the east on one side and the west on the other side?

Response: Due to the geometric constraints, the combination of the horizontal and vertical alignments would make for an undesirable roadway, so no, I don’t think that would be probable.
**Question:** Mr. Eddy: Can you explain what a “Signature Bridge” is and would that be considered for this bridge replacement?

**Response:** A “Signature Bridge” is a bridge that can be identified just by looking at it. The Brooklyn Bridge and Golden Gate Bridges are both Signature Bridges. The price of this type of bridge is much more than the standard bridge FDOT would construct. There are additional amenities that could enhance the character of the bridge, such as lighting and architectural features. Additionally, during the PD&E phase, we try not to make commitments that the designer would have to abide by as that limits the flexibility of the design. Typical commitments that we would make as a part of this document could include recreational facilities such as park improvements.

**Question:** Mr. Mackey: Does each section have to be the same number of lanes, or can we have 3 lanes going into Pensacola and 2 lanes going into Gulf Breeze? Three lanes into Gulf Breeze would also allow for more efficient hurricane evacuation.

**Response:** We may look at that option, but there may be a way to preserve capacity through Gulf Breeze with access management and signal timing.

**Comment:** Ms. Papajohn - I waited for 8 minutes at a traffic light in Gulf Breeze while traveling to this meeting.

**Comment:** Mr. Mackey - I like the 5 lane bridge option.

**Comment:** Ms. Robinson - The bottle neck is the traffic through Gulf Breeze and Pensacola, it is not the bridge.

**Comment:** Mr. Eddy: With 65,000 or 75,000 vehicles a day through Gulf Breeze, that would mean that there is no cross town access.

**Response:** Adjusting signal timings would delay cross street traffic even more with the higher volumes on U.S. 98.

**Comment:** Ms. Papajohn: The press releases for this project need to be more defined. I know it is for the replacement of the existing bridge, but residents will assure me that this is for a new bridge like the previous study.

**Response:** The earlier studies considered a bridge that had different landfall locations where this bridge will be in the same vicinity of the existing bridge. The project information sheets indicate the project limits.

**Question:** Mr. Williams: I have an agenda on this Project Advisory Group and this is to make this existing bridge a world class fishing pier attraction. The existing Escambia County fishing pier is a great fishing amenity, but it gets filled up with local folks and there isn’t room for visitors. The existing fishing pier is also too short and doesn’t get out into the deep water.
Question: Mr. Brown: Who do we get additional right-of-way from when we go over the water?

Response: We would get that from the State.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Have you looked at stormwater and retention pond requirements?

Response: We have not looked at that yet. There may be compensatory treatment in Gulf Breeze and/or Pensacola. The type of stormwater treatment will be examined in the next phase of the project.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Are you planning to knock down the Bay Beach Inn and call it a retention pond?

Response: We haven’t identified stormwater facilities or a treatment plan at this point.

Question: Ms. Lee: What about lighting and making this a signature bridge?

Response: That would add to the cost of the bridge. One thing FDOT District 3 has been asked to do is to analyze whether the replacement bridge could be tolled. There is a statewide initiative by FDOT to investigate where private funding (tolls) can be implemented. The District 3 Secretary has directed us to look at managed lanes and tolling, which will be another study. Managed lanes are designated lanes that allow certain types of traffic. A high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane is one example. This is a road pricing method that would allow single occupant vehicle to travel in high occupancy lanes for a fee. It does not mean that the decision has been made to toll the replacement bridge. It only means that a feasibility study will be done to see if tolling is something that would work.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Is there anywhere else on U.S. 98 that has a toll?

Response: Not that we know of.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: Can the State collect tolls on a road that was built with Federal funds?

Response: It has been done in the past.

Question: Mr. Williams: The Garcon Point Bridge is the highest tolled bridge in the State of Florida. The Pensacola Bay Bridge is the only way we have to cross the Bay. I would not want to be the person who says that there is going to be a toll bridge there.

Response: There are lots of issues with replacing the existing bridge with a toll bridge. The Environmental Justice portion of this study will have to look at ways to get across and how to provide access without tolls.
**Question:** Mr. Williams: The Interstate 110 Bridge has the Blue Angels on it. Those are ours (Pensacola's) nobody else has those. We could do something like that on the replacement bridge.

**Response:** That could be done, but the cost would have to be picked up by local governments. Scenic Highway is like a Signature Bridge with the lighting that is being installed. There is a difference in the cost and the will be picked up by Escambia County. Whatever the cost difference is for lighting on this bridge will need to be picked up by local governments.

**Question:** Ms. Robinson: What support from the governments and tourist development council would there be for support of a huge fishing bridge? I know there was some last minute support to keep the I-110 bridge as a fishing bridge, but it was too late in the process.

**Comment:** Mr. Williams: Mike Flowers of the Florida Sportsman was doing that. That one we didn’t have time to get things in order. This one we do.

**Question:** Ms. Robinson: We can make that a “Community Desired Feature”. There could be aesthetic upgrades, but who maintains a 3 ½ mile fishing bridge?

**Response:** It may be possible to keep one of the existing twin bridges to keep maintenance costs low. This is an item that will be examined in the evaluation of the corridors.

**Question:** Mr. Mackey: Can we use the cost of demolition to put toward the maintenance? If it costs eight million dollars to demo the bridge, that could be put into an escrow account and used for maintenance costs.

**Response:** Mr. Eddy: It cost the City of Gulf Breeze about two million dollars to demo what was left of the old bridge.

**Comment:** Mr. De Vries: We just demolished the I-10 bridge, so I can find what the cost was to complete that.

**Question:** Mr. Williams: I have a ½ hour TV slot on Thursday and a 1 hour radio slot on Saturday. What would you like me tell people?

**Response:** That we have our website, [www.pensacolabaybridge.com](http://www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and that people should come out to the Workshop on August 11th at the Pensacola Civic Center. Get involved and provide input for the decision makers to consider.

Mr. Bruner thanked everyone for coming and the meeting ended.
5.2 Project Advisory Group Meeting Number 2 (December 6, 2011)

PAG Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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FDOT: Brandon Bruner, Howard Hodge, Jim DeVries
RS&H: Dan Kristoff, Nick Arnio, Drew Roark

Note: This meeting was not recorded by the presenters nor was it transcribed verbatim. These minutes are a general summary of the items discussed. The meeting began at approximately 5:00 CDT

Introduction

Mr. Bruner welcomed the Project Advisory Group (PAG) Members and began introductions. A number of non-PAG members attended the meeting to observe. Mr. Bruner requested audience members to postpone questions until the end of the meeting.

Mr. Kristoff requested that each person on the PAG introduce themselves. He reiterated that the PAG is not a decision-making body. Mr. Kristoff briefed the PAG attendees on the contents of the handout packet, which included minutes of PAG meeting No. 1 and the October 18, 2011 Corridor Alternatives Meeting slides and handout.
Mr. Kristoff introduced Nick Arnio, who briefed the audience on two related ongoing studies – the US 98 Gulf Breeze Access Management Study and the Toll Revenue Study. Mr. Arnio mentioned that the Access Management Study is examining existing and future traffic as well as crash history through Gulf Breeze. The study will recommend access management improvements that are not part of the PD&E study. The Toll Revenue Study will examine the feasibility of tolling the new Pensacola Bay Bridge. Mr. Bruner stated that the “managed lane” concept of tolling bridges is being re-evaluated due to anticipated engineering issues and may not be carried forward as a viable option.

Gulf Breeze Access Management Study, Toll Revenue Study, and Aesthetic Enhancements

Comment: Mr. DeVries: Regarding the Access Management Study, District 3 is planning a resurfacing project in 2014 through Gulf Breeze. Adaptive signalization will be included.

Question: Mr. Brown: Is the Toll Revenue Study separate from the PD&E Study?

Response: Mr. Bruner: Yes. The Toll Revenue and Access Management Studies will have separate reports.

Response: Mr. Kristoff: We do not know the extent to which the Toll Revenue Study will be carried forward. Senior FDOT management will make this decision.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: Will the Toll Revenue Study consider impacts?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: No. The study considers only revenue that may be produced to assist in funding the project for the state.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Why would the Toll Revenue Study not consider impacts?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: If the recommendation from the Toll Revenue Study is to carry forward tolling, the bridge and roadway concepts in the PD&E study will reflect this option.

Comment: Mr. Eddy: The 2002-2004 PD&E study did not analyze social and cultural effects. Gulf Breeze is impacted by the economic consequences of tolls.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: Why is the state looking at tolls? I thought the Federal Government was going to pay for the bridge replacement.

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Both federal and state governments are experiencing revenue shortfalls. While federal and state highway funds will be used, FDOT is examining possible alternative funding sources, and tolls would provide a dedicated local revenue stream.

Comment: Mr. Kristoff directed the PAG members’ attention to the handout packet containing the slide show from the October 18, 2011 Corridor Alternatives Meeting. Mr. Kristoff noted that the project team is planning to make a decision on which corridors to carry forward by February 2012 in order to meet the project schedule. The Central Corridor has two representative alternatives – Central East and Central West. The US Coast Guard requires a minimum of 65’ of clearance above the main span. The new bridge will be approximately 10’ to
12' above the existing bridge. Three-dimensional renderings contained in the PAG Meeting No. 2 slide show (also included in the handout packet) display some representative concepts of the bridge configuration. Compared to the existing bridge, longer vertical curves on the new bridge will yield a more aesthetically pleasing structure. Lighting and special railings shown in the renderings are also aesthetic enhancements that will be considered as the concepts are studied in detail.

Comment: Mr. Dana: What are the enhancements, what is the cost, and will locals have to contribute to the cost? Will architectural lighting be considered?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The aesthetic enhancements are just beginning to be considered. When considering the cost of the overall project, the cost of aesthetic enhancements is minimal. The study team will be considering architectural lighting. Regarding participation of local governments, agreements with local municipalities are generally required. A number of comments in favor of aesthetic enhancements have been received thus far.

Comment: Mr. Kristoff mentioned that the project is on schedule, and the next public meeting is planned for the summer of 2012.

Question: Mr. DeVries: When is the decision to transition from the corridor to alternatives phase of study? Will you select the East, Central, or West corridors?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The decision regarding which corridors to carry forward is planned to be made by February to March, 2012. At that time, the alternatives in each corridor will be examined in significantly more detail.

Corridor Discussion

Mr. Kristoff provided an explanation of each corridor and the representative alignments analyzed as part of the corridor analysis. The following sections outline the noteworthy points of each alternative and include a summary of the subsequent questions, comments, and responses.

Alternative East (East Corridor)

Mr. Kristoff explained that the existing two-to-three lane transitions in Gulf Breeze in the north- and southbound directions will be eliminated under all alternatives. The existing six lanes through Gulf Breeze will continue as six lanes onto the reconstructed approaches and the new bridge. Due to the need for restriping, the existing pavement may be resurfaced beginning at the Baybridge Drive intersection and extending to the point where the existing pavement width is reduced for the lane pick-up/drop. Under Alternative East, the existing bridge could be converted to a fishing pier, which would require local governments to take over its maintenance. Alternative East has increased environmental impacts due to required fill into the bay. On the Pensacola side, Alternative East requires removal of the existing fishing pier. Access to the west side of the Pensacola approach is possible via a proposed access road connecting to a reconstructed 17th Avenue intersection, which would require an additional traffic signal phase to accommodate the access road.
Mr. MacKay: Can funds saved by not demolishing the existing bridge be given to Gulf Breeze as an escrow for its maintenance?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: This question would require a legal opinion from FDOT counsel. However, this type of a mechanism for bridge maintenance funding is not typical. If the existing bridge is retained, aesthetics on the new bridge diminishes in importance. Should a municipality decide to take over maintenance of the existing bridge, local governments must recognize the risk of damage to the existing structure due to hurricanes or tropical storms.

Response: Mr. DeVries: FDOT would need to research this question. There is no precedent that I know of for this option.

Ms. Papajohn: From the previous public opinion surveys, what was the preference between demolishing and retaining the existing structure?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The public opinion surveys were split approximately 50/50.

Mr. Brown: Could a pedestrian walkway be accommodated? What does FEMA think about the demolition of the recently constructed existing fishing pier?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Since there is no usable land on the east side of Alternative East, there would be no land to connect to and no reason for a pedestrian walkway beneath the new bridge. Regarding the existing fishing pier opened in 2010, the pier would require replacement.

Mr. Dana: On the Pensacola approach, how would pedestrians cross to the west side?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Pedestrians would cross at the 17th Avenue signalized intersection.

Alternative Central East (Central Corridor)

Mr. Kristoff explained the Central East alternative, which requires demolition of the existing bridge. Alternative Central East minimizes access impacts to the businesses on the west side of the Gulf Breeze approach and has no residential impacts and will be able to accommodate the existing boat launch. A new access road to the existing boat launch would be constructed. Currently, median openings are not shown on the alternatives and are undergoing further analysis. A median opening is likely needed in the vicinity of the boat launch access road / Wayside Park East access road. On the Pensacola approach, Alternative Central East has direct impacts to the Welcome Center parking lot but spares the building.

Mr. Eddy: Is there pedestrian access on the east side of the Gulf Breeze approach, and is the clearance requirement for a pedestrian underpass the same as for a roadway?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Alternative Central East would allow pedestrian access adjacent to the access road passing beneath the new bridge and connecting Wayside Park East with the boat launch. Regarding the clearance requirements, the clearance
for a pedestrian underpass requires a lesser distance compared to the clearance required for a vehicle.

**Alternative Central West (Central Corridor)**

Mr. Kristoff explained Alternative Central West, which also requires demolition of the existing bridge (similar to Central East). An alternate profile for the Central West alternative is being studied to overpass the existing boat launch parking area. Alternative Central West has no impacts to Wayside Park East, other than a small portion of the entrance road reconstruction due to the increased elevation of the mainline. On the Pensacola approach, Alternative Central West does not impact the existing fishing pier and can accommodate a sidewalk beneath the bridge, thereby connecting both sides of the peninsula.

**Question:** Mr. Dana: Could the traffic light at 17th Avenue be eliminated?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: A flyover emanating from 17th Avenue would eliminate the need for an at-grade triple left turn. However, a traffic signal would still be required for Bayfront Parkway eastbound vehicles wishing to turn northward on 17th Avenue. An interchange with Bayfront Parkway overpassing the 17th Avenue intersection would also eliminate the Bayfront Parkway and 17th Avenue left turn movements but cannot accommodate all the movements presently available for the roadway split between westbound Bayfront Parkway and Gregory Street.

**Alternative West (West Corridor)**

Mr. Kristoff explained Alternative West, which significantly impacts (removes from operation) the existing boat launch and the businesses to the south while avoiding Wayside Park East. On the Pensacola approach, Alternative West avoids Wayside Park, the existing bridge, and the existing fishing pier but has significant impacts into the bay in the vicinity of Project Green Shores.

**Comment:** Ms. Papajohn: The hotel owner is in the process of remodeling and expanding. Alternative West may impact a significant commercial operation.

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: We will continue to work on alternatives that minimize business damages.

**Question:** Mr. Mackay: Does the boat launch need to be replaced?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Yes. For Alternative West, we will examine options for replacement of the boat launch.

**Question:** Mr. DeVries: Could the Alternative West profile be extended over the boat launch and parking, as with Alternative Central West?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Yes, the profile could be extended, but access would occur from the east side only. With the required pier spacing beneath the bridge, the function of the boat launch would be compromised. The space beneath an extended bridge would accommodate parking.
Question: Mr. DeVries: What about impacts to Project Green Shores?

Response: Mr. Bruner: As part of the NEPA process, FDOT has a requirement to “avoid and minimize” regarding environmental impacts.

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Our divers have performed a marine survey and indicate that no sea grasses have been found within the footprint of the various alternatives being considered.

Section 4(f) Involvement

Mr. Kristoff explained the history and purpose of the USDOT Section 4(f) legislation, which addresses potential impacts to public lands. Mr. Kristoff noted that the text specifically refers to the determination of significance by local officials having jurisdiction over the property in question. Federal courts have specifically upheld this statute, which is among the most important in the NEPA process.

Mr. Kristoff explained the definition of usable park land while focusing on the Section 4(f) exhibits contained in the handout packet. Usable park land includes the Gulf Breeze boat launch and Wayside Park East. On the Pensacola side, the usable park land includes the fishing pier and Wayside Park, including the Welcome Center. However, FDOT owns the right-of-way by deed on the west side. Mr. Kristoff acknowledged that the determination of significance of Section 4(f) property is subjective and that the severity of impacts versus the importance of features (i.e., parking vs. picnic area) must be examined thoroughly.

Mitigation for potential Section 4(f) impacts will also be required.

Question: Mr. DeVries: What about utilizing the footprint of the existing roadway and embankment as replacement park land?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Yes, the land formerly occupied by the existing roadway and embankment could be used for mitigation of park impacts. The surface area of mitigation land will depend upon the roadway slope, retaining walls, etc., utilized by the new roadway. Some impacts such as the loss of waterfront frontage with the West and East alternatives cannot realistically be mitigated in the vicinity of the bridge approaches.

Question: Mr. DeVries: Why is the proposed footprint of the access road on the east side of Alternative Central East shown as a Section 4(f) impact?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: This impact is shown because the access road is shifted eastward compared to its existing location and requires the taking of 28 parking spaces in front of the pavilions.

Comment: Mr. Kristoff: What constitutes acceptable mitigation for Section 4(f) impacts? Mitigation must be suitable to the jurisdictional agency. A Section 4(f) impact cannot always be completely mitigated. As an example, relocating the boat launch to an alternate location may not be an equal option due to the existing boat launch’s unique proximity to deep water.
Response: Mr. Bruner: Typically, mitigation constitutes replacement of in-kind or better, typically in the same vicinity. In the case of the Pensacola Bay Bridge, the Section 4(f) land is a by-product of the existing bridge.

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The Section 4(f) evaluation is based on the land and features that are in place now, and any mitigation plan is achieved by consensus of the stakeholders. Regarding the courts, alternatives that minimize or avoid impacts to Section 4(f) property have a better chance of obtaining project approval and avoiding lawsuits. Avoiding business or residential impacts versus avoiding Section 4(f) property is not viewed as an equal trade-off.

Question: Mr. Brown: To clarify, a park that is a byproduct of a road or bridge is favored over business and residential impacts in the courts?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: Yes. Section 4(f) regulations have been developed and refined as a result of case law and precedence.

Question: Ms. Papajohn: In light of the Section 4(f) issue, should we simply move forward with the alternative with the least red (Section 4(f) impact)?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: No, not necessarily.

Question: Mr. Mackay: Is there a legal risk only if someone files a lawsuit?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: No, the Federal Highway Administration must also approve of the recommended alternative. A legal challenge could always be filed later, even after the project begins construction.

Question: Mr. Eddy: Why were alternatives studied that had significant Section 4(f) impacts?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The alternative having no Section 4(f) impact is the No-Build alternative, which would lead to eventual bridge closure and is the least desirable option. Four alternatives were studied in order to thoroughly examine the options and consequences. It is not reasonably possible to replace the existing bridge and meet the future traffic demand without affecting some Section 4(f) property.

Comment: Mr. Eddy: The trend appears to be a focus on the western alternatives.

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The Central Corridor is the optimal corridor location regarding impacts and can accommodate two alignment alternatives – Central East and Central West. At this point, the focus is on which of the three corridors to carry forward – East, Central, and/or West.

Question: Mr. Williamson: Is there a possibility to have a ballot referendum on which of the three corridors to carry forward?

Response: Mr. Kristoff: The study team is planning to meet with the local governments. However, holding a ballot referendum would delay the study and not necessarily

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ensure project approval by the FHWA. Remember, the East and West corridors have the greatest impacts.

**Question:** Mr. Williamson: Has the study team coordinated with the railroad?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Yes. The railroad had indicated that they have no funding to spend on any railroad improvements in this vicinity.

**Comment:** Mr. DeVries: The railroad is unlikely to move.

**Comment:** Mr. Kristoff: In summary, the Central West Alternative has the least impacts overall, and the west side of the Pensacola approach could be improved to support additional park features, such as picnic pavilions, landscaping, and pedestrian accommodations.

**Question:** Mr. MacKay: Will the study team perform an analysis of the alternatives?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Yes, the study team will thoroughly analyze the impacts and mitigation potential of each alternative.

**Comment:** Mr. MacKay: Please consider using concrete from any bridge demolition as fishing structure in lieu of dumping the material elsewhere.

**Question:** Mr. Brown: To emphasize the importance of the Gulf Breeze boat launch, please refer to it as a boat launch as opposed to simply a parking lot.

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Understood. The study team recognizes the importance of the boat launch to the community. To save the facility, we are in the process of examining a bridge extension over the boat launch area with the Central West Alternative. Extending the bridge adds cost but is mitigation for the Section 4(f) impacts. The eastern half of the existing boat launch parking has a relatively steep slope and can be lowered, thereby creating a flatter parking area and assisting in meeting a 16’ clearance below an extended bridge.

**Question:** T. Brown: Why is a tunnel not a viable alternative?

**Response:** Mr. Kristoff: Tunnels are extremely costly, difficult to engineer, permit, and construct, and have an issue of the impacts that occur at the land surface connections. Regarding the Pensacola Bay Bridge, the existing peninsulas forming the bridge approaches are very narrow and not conducive to a tunnel.

**Comment:** Mr. MacKay: An excellent example of fishing-friendly shoreline treatment is Alabama Point located at the western foot of the Perdido Pass Bridge (Perdido Beach Blvd. over Perdido Pass). The paved walkway and bulkheaded shoreline is conducive to fishing, while the railings ensure safety of the public. He encouraged a similar treatment be considered for this project.

Mr. Bruner and Mr. Kristoff thanked the attendees for their time, comments, and contributions to the project. Mr. Kristoff reiterated that a decision on which corridors to carry forward is anticipated to occur in late February/early March of next year. The meeting was adjourned shortly after 7 PM CST.
6.0 Public Meetings

Three public meetings have been held on this project. All meetings were conducted at the Pensacola Civic Center. The Corridor Workshop occurred on August 11, 2011. The Corridor Alternatives Meeting occurred on October 18, 2011. The Public Alternatives Meeting occurred on October 18, 2012. The following sections display each written comment received and the response that was mailed by FDOT to the individual making the comment. Each FDOT comment response reflects the agency’s reply at the time the response was written. Several issues, such as tolling, have evolved, and the FDOT response may not reflect the most current FDOT position. For tolling comments in particular, the FDOT responses written prior to January 2013 state that tolling the new bridge is under study. Since tolling the bridge is no longer being considered, future responses will state this point.

6.1 Comments and Responses From Corridor Workshop (August 11, 2011)

Comment:
Access under ends of bridge for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross. (Pulley, 10/5/11)

Response:
Making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, sidewalks, and connectivity between each side of the bridge are also of high importance.

Comment:
Please add me to the mailing list. (Anderson, 10/5/11)

Response:
Your contact information will be added to our project data base to ensure that you receive all of the newsletters and mail-outs associated with this project.

Comment:
Carry 6 lanes of traffic through entire route (especially Gulf Breeze) and consider temporary bridging at the bridge ends. (Sessions, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration. The Department of Transportation values your participation in the project.
Comment:
Please add me to the mailing list (Shannon, 10/5/12)

Response:
Your contact information will be added to our project database to ensure that you receive all of the newsletters and mail-outs associated with this project. Thank you for your comment and interest in the Pensacola Bay Bridge project.

Comment:
Please add me to the mailing list (Cleveland, 10/5/11)

Response:
Your contact information will be added to our project database to ensure that you receive all of the newsletters and mail-outs associated with this project. Thank you for your comment and interest in the Pensacola Bay Bridge project.

Comment:
Come up with a distinctive name other than Pensacola Bay Bridge. This is easily confused with I-10 “Bay Bridge.” Distinction is important when publicizing accidents. (Hall, 10/5/11)

Response:
Improving the iconic status of the Pensacola Bay Bridge is important to the region. This project is an opportunity for such a change. Your comment will be considered in the design process.

Comment:
West side appears to be favorable to residents in Gulf Breeze; not as favorable to a very few merchants. The west would not interfere with the Pensacola fishing bridge. As a resident on Baybridge Dr. I prefer the west. In either scenario, Baybridge residents need something like a “roundabout” to facilitate turns to the east. (Jennings, 10/5/11)

Response:
The location of the new bridge will be analyzed for impacts to both residential parcels and businesses, as well as the fishing pier. The traffic operations at the entrance to Baybridge Drive will be analyzed as part of the replacement bridge process. Access management and intersection improvements will be considered.

Comment:
I was a sub consultant on the deconstruction of 3 Mile Bridge. There may be a few permitting pitfalls to avoid, such as archeological resources and critical habitat. Please call if you need assistance. (Reed, 10/5/11)

Response:
Thank you for offering your services. If there is anything the Department finds that you could be of assistance with, we will contact you. The Department values your participation in the project. Thank you for your comments and interest.
Comment:
1. Biggest concern is crossing Highway 98 East and West
2. More police patrol or more police presence
3. A vehicle to clear disabled vehicles (similar to the vehicle on the interstate)
4. Stop lights in Gulf Breeze need to change more frequently; delay is too long
5. Yay to new bridge (Fournaris, 10/5/11)

Response:
Crossing U.S. 98 from side streets or businesses has been identified as a safety issue. U.S. 98 is a heavily traveled regional facility that connects more than just the cities of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. The delay at each of the signalized intersections will be analyzed to optimize the throughput of vehicles.

Safety concerns regarding the presence of police have been noted. Services, such as “Road Rangers”, for the future bridge are being considered. The new bridge will be designed with breakdown lanes so that disabled vehicles can safely move out of the way of through vehicles.

Comment:
Good information meeting (Pehek, 10/5/11)

Response:
We are glad that you found the meeting informative. Suggestions on how to improve our meetings are welcomed.

Comment:
Who pays to relocate the water main and 2 FOCs on the West side of the bridge? (submarine utilities) (Neu, 10/5/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will compile all costs, including utility relocations into the cost for the replacement bridge. Currently, there are no construction funds available, but it is anticipated that funding will be both Federal and State allocated funds.

Comment:
1. New bridge should be 6 lanes
2. Sidewalk/bike lane in each direction
3. Be sure to consider the potential for rising sea levels
4. Like the concept of placing 2 new bridges on the West side of the existing bridge. This might mean the end of the old, junky, motel in Gulf Breeze and protect the parks on the East side of both ends of the Bay (Esry, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.
In addition, making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. We want to provide a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and much more are being considered in the design of the new bridge.

The elevation of the bridge will be 10 to 15 feet higher than the existing bridge due to current design standards. The maximum height of the bridge is also recommended to be at least 65 feet high to match the height of upstream bridges and meet U.S. Coast Guard navigation requirements.

There are three corridors currently being considered. The West Corridor could possibly cause business damages and eliminate the boat launch facility.

Comment:
Informative meeting to the public was very organized and very informative (Pehek, 10/5/11)

Response:
We are glad that you found the meeting informative. Suggestions on how to improve our meetings are welcomed.

Comment:
Consider moving thru traffic from I-110 thru Heinberg in to the new bridge and Bury the traffic lane on Heinberg as low as feasible, i.e. the water table. (Hernandez, 10/5/11)

Response:
Additional improvements to the roadway network outside of the study limits are not a part of this scope. The project limits are from North 17th Avenue in Pensacola to Baybridge Drive in Gulf Breeze. Your input will be considered if the opportunity to expand the study presents itself.

Comment:
High enough for sailboats to go under; that’s good for locals and local tourism, and There is a place/pier for fisherman; that’s good for families that depend on the extra protein (Gissendanner, 10/5/11)

Response:
A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. The proposed height of the replacement bridge will consider access for sailboats and the height of the upstream bridges. Many different aspects of the area play a role in the design process, including businesses and tourism. The fishing pier is a valuable resource to the area and will be considered when determining which corridor the replacement bridge will be built on.

Comment:
I am an avid sailor and my boat needs over 52’ clearance. Please make center channel clearance the standard 65’ (Gissendanner, 10/5/11)
Response:
A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. Many different aspects of the area are playing a role in the design process, including business and tourism. The proposed height of the replacement bridge will consider access for sailboats and the height of the upstream bridges.

Comment:
1. Need more study regarding the North/South landfall of the bridge
2. A suggestion is a “Y” at either end of the bridge, which would help traffic patterns both North and South landfall
3. Another suggestion—any overhead structure thru city of Gulf Breeze to help reduce traffic (Brodee, 10/5/11)

Response:
The landfall areas near North 17th Avenue and Baybridge Drive are being studied to best accommodate the replacement bridge. Additional improvements to the roadway network outside of the study limits are not a part of this scope. The project limits are from North 17th Avenue in Pensacola to Baybridge Drive in Gulf Breeze. Your input will be considered if the opportunity to expand the study presents itself.

Comment:
Let’s keep bridge in same location (Battel, 10/5/11)

Response:
A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. Many different aspects of the area are playing a role in the design process, including business, tourism, and recreation. There are three corridors currently under consideration. All of these corridors are in close proximity to the existing bridge location.

Comment:
1. Try to save as many Live Oaks as possible. Just because I don’t use the fishing pier and picnic areas doesn’t mean I won’t fight to keep them
2. We need more opportunities for people to enjoy access to the water (Buchana, 10/5/11)

Response:
A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. Many different aspects of the area are playing a role in the design process, including business, tourism, and recreation.

There are three corridors currently being considered. The West Corridor could possibly cause business damages and eliminate the boat launch facility. Additional amenities that provide access to the water may be considered to mitigate for the loss of existing amenities.

Comment:
I would prefer the East/West corridor option—the existing bridge placement will be much more expensive as well as disruptive. Our area has suffered from a major hurricane (Ivan) and the BP oil spill. We don’t need more disruption to our daily
lives. In addition, we only have one road in or out of our home. I would encourage
the state to consider our geographic limitations when replacing the Three-Mile
Bridge. (Graham, 10/5/11)

Response:
The construction of the replacement Pensacola Bay Bridge will be planned to
minimize the disruption to traffic as over 55,000 vehicles a day travel between the
cities of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. Access to residences and businesses will be
considered and will remain open throughout the construction of the replacement
bridge.

Comment:
No tolls on bridge (Landfair, 10/5/11)

Response:
Your comment is noted. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has
been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when
building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge
replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to determine if
tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State. The possibility of installing a toll
on the new bridge and its effects on the community is being analyzed.

Comment:
1. 6 lane bridge
2. 6 lanes in Gulf Breeze (no more lanes in GB) West corridor
3. Signature design enhancements desired
4. 17th Ave ingress and egress must be protected
5. Toll free bridge (Robinson, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new
bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken
into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.

Improving the iconic status of the Pensacola Bay Bridge is important to the region.
This project is an ideal opportunity for such a change. It will be considered in the
design process.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor
Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and
bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will
conduct a toll revenue study to see if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the
State. The possibility of installing a toll on the new bridge and its effects on the
community is being analyzed.

Comment:
Strongly opposed to any second bridge that would land near Bayshore Rd. Proper
engineering can adequately handle future traffic growth. Therefore only 6 lane plan
be considered. (Jeffcoat, 10/5/11)
Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.

The replacement of the existing bridge will take place within the immediate area of the existing bridge. A secondary bridge is not cost feasible at this time and is not part of the scope of this project.

Comment:
1. Please evaluate the following suggestion by commissioner Cole (Santa Rosa County) at least two TPO meetings. Consultants specifically said that project limits would not be a problem (All one alternative-build for the present, design for the future)
2. Build replacement bridge w/ 6 lane landfall in Pensacola, Stripe-out 2 lane until needed in the future
3. Build replacement bridge w/ 4 lane landfall in Gulf Breeze
4. Design so that a spur (2 lanes) could be added in the future, when 6 lanes are needed. This would solve the need for 6 lanes and avoid impact to the city of Gulf Breeze (Model, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.

The spur that would tie U.S. 98 east of Gulf Breeze into the replacement bridge is beyond the study limits for this project. As part of the study, an access management analysis is being conducted through the city of Gulf Breeze to avoid the additional widening of U.S. 98.

Comment:
Consider leaving the current bridge in place and converting it to a fishing bridge. (Kostevicki, 10/5/11)

Response:
A bridge design that serves the needs of the community is very important to us. Many different aspects of the area are playing a role in the design process, including business, tourism, and recreation. The Department of transportation is considering the possibility that some segments the existing bridge may remain in place for recreational use. The participation by local in maintaining the existing bridge will be important in the decision regarding the final disposition of the bridge.

Comment:
...this is an elevated highway or two tier as some call it. Construction of the incline for US 98 would start east of the Gulf Breeze city limits .... A bypass road or exit will be constructed parallel to existing roadway using current right of way property and possibly some land from Gulf Islands National Seashore Live Oaks Reservation.
This road will virtually go around the base of the incline enabling west bound traffic wanting to go to Gulf Breeze to do so w/o going on the elevated highway....There will be an identical bypass leaving Gulf Breeze east bound...Another very important feature is that the existing bridge remains open during construction of the elevated roadway. The elevated roadway will follow the footprint of the existing roadway reducing the amount of land and right of way to purchase. The elevated highway will start a gradual sweeping "S" configuration over Pensacola Bay and make landfall in one of two locations: the first and closest would be at the end of 9th Ave at Bayfront Pkwy in Pensacola; the second and more versatile would be to continue as an elevated highway and connect into the end of I-110. This would allow through traffic on US 98 to pass directly from east of the City of Gulf Breeze to I-110 to I-10 w/o gridlock in town. There will be on/off ramps to the elevated highway at 9th Ave and at 17th Ave at Bayfront Pkwy. Both of these are main arteries to the existing bridge.... Another plus to this type of construction is that the old bridge can be made into a fishing pier, replacing the very successful one taken out by Hurricane Ivan and eliminate the cost of demolition of this old bridge. (Ewing, 10/5/11)

Response:
Your comments are appreciated, however, major improvements to the roadway network outside of the study limits are not a part of this scope. The project limits are from North 17th Avenue in Pensacola to Baybridge Drive in Gulf Breeze.

Comment:
Make it alternative transportation "friendly". Do this ASAP. (Swiebel, 10/5/11)

Response:
Making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks are being considered in the design of the new bridge.

Comment:
Why not a tunnel? Tunnel wouldn't get destroyed by hurricanes. Self-sufficient, -reliant, -sustainable electricity sources: 1) small wind energy turbines, 2) solar-photovoltaic cells on each light and sign pole/structure. All lights (+illuminated signage) shall be LED. LED lights for bike/ped path/lanes for night travel. Multi-use (Bike/Path) underpass at each bridge landing. Safety call boxes for vehicle drivers and bike/ped folks. A few quick rest benches for 3 mile ped. Drinking fountains for the pedestrians. (Hunt, 10/5/11)

Response:
Making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the District. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks are being considered in the design of the new bridge.

In general tunnels are more costly to both construct and maintain when crossing major bodies of water. Supporting electrical and mechanical systems to provide proper ventilation are required to disperse the gaseous emissions and provide safety
to the motorist. Usually, pull off lanes for disabled vehicles are eliminated from the tunnels due to construction cost factor, and provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians are not provided due to both safety and cost considerations. The crossing of Pensacola Bay provides the motorist with huge vistas of the natural attributes of the Pensacola region, which will be lost by a tunnel alternative. In addition, landfall treatments are much more difficult and usually more disruptive to the existing communities.

Comment:
Can we not utilize Garçon Point to take traffic from Hwy 98 to Pensacola and Vis Versa not as a toll bridge? Can we build a one way bridge from Pensacola to G.B. and another one way GB to Pen? I do not want to see added traffic thru GB proper via 3 lanes that would take away from our current businesses. Thank you for the hard work put into this process. (Odom, 10/5/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to see if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State. The possibility of installing a toll on the new bridge and its effects on the community is being analyzed. Many alternatives including tolling of only the new capacity are being considered.

Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.

Comment:
I have driven the current bridge several times a day for the past several years. Traffic patterns have remained roughly constant, and the approaches at either end are pleasant, convenient, and useful (in terms of business) to drive. My view is that the best outcome would be a slightly modernized version of the existing bridge—slightly higher to avoid hurricane waves, much better bike/pedestrian and breakdown lanes, but still a fairly standard bay bridge with two lanes of traffic each way. I understand that growth on Highway 98 between Gulf Breeze and Fort Walton Beach will cause congestion issues in the future. However, the problems will be greater on the Gulf Breeze and Naval Live Oaks areas than on the bay bridge. I would prefer that efforts be made to siphon off traffic farther down Highway 98 (for exp, the state could buy and lower the toll on the Garçon Point Bridge rather than increase the automotive capacity of the bay bridge. Thank you this opportunity to give feedback. (Odom, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.
In addition, making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks are being considered in the design of the new bridge.

The Garçon Point Bridge is in the regional travel demand model and its effect on regional traffic patterns is taken into consideration with respect to the traffic forecasts that are being developed for the Pensacola Bay Bridge study. However, evaluating the tolls on the Garçon Point Bridge is beyond the scope of this study.

Comment:
Design—Make it unique! Like Tampa. A new “icon” for the Pensacola area. Thank you. (Ballock, 10/5/11)

Response:
Improving the iconic status of the Pensacola Bay Bridge is important to the region. This project provides an opportunity for such a change. An aesthetically pleasing bridge will be considered in the design process.

Comment:
I think a walk under bridge from the Visitors Info Center to the other side is a big advantage and safety issues to the public. The CTST and BPAC support this walkability feature. In addition I like the 6 lane better because it would cost less to build it now than in 20 years. Let’s do a walkable/ bike bridge connector to add the safety factor of walking/biking under 17th Ave Bridge. (Mayall, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.

In addition, making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks are being considered in the design of the new bridge. Multi-modal accommodations will be analyzed at the bridge landings in order to provide better connectivity.

Comment:
We just need a new bridge that will take care of safety and increased traffic. (Moultron, 10/5/11)

Response:
The new bridge will have full-width shoulders to accommodate disabled vehicles. Other safety concerns are being addressed with the installation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration.
Comment:
I am listening to the various ideas going around at this stage of development. My biggest concern is the possibility of this becoming a toll bridge. I like many others go across this bridge to go to work every day. This could add up to an astronomical cost for those of us going to work every day and paying a toll, not to mention the back log of cars to pay a toll. If it were to become like the Garcon Bridge that charges 3.50 + each way – with jobs scarce and income low it would be detrimental to a lot of people to use this bridge and we in Gulf Breeze could become trapped in the ability to be able to afford to drive to work and home. I understand this is an expensive bridge to build but a toll could be very hard on many people. Yes the beach has a toll but the majority of people do not “have” to go to the beach every day. The population on the beach is much less than those that use the Bay Bridge. I hope this type of situation will have a big consideration before having a toll bridge. (Amspacher, 10/5/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State. The possibility of installing a toll on the new bridge and its effects on the community is being analyzed.

Comment:
Thanks much to both of you for your interest in hearing the community’s differing views of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement. I thought the turnout was great. The material was well prepared and conveyed the message well. I wanted to put into writing what I mentioned to several FDOT and RSH Engineers last evening. I keep telling everyone that there are two views from the Gulf Breeze side of the bridge. The City of Gulf Breeze is only one and it is significantly smaller than the 46,000 voters east of the City of Gulf Breeze many of whom use the bridge every day of the work week to commute to their jobs and return home 90% of whom DO NOT stop in the City of Gulf Breeze. Tommie asked about my thoughts on FDOT needing to consider a toll arrangement for the replacement bridge. I advised that FDOT would raise holy terror from the Peninsula residents and beyond if they did not offer some advantage to converting to a toll system. Some suggestions that I offered for FDOT consideration, was to at least commission an additional piece to their existing study and evaluate the value of planning for the next twenty years with a future option of an elevated lane or two coming directly off Chase Street - no traffic lights – and merging onto the new bridge east bound and west bound exist with options for 17th Avenue and on to Gregory or even I-110. I have explained that the 17th Ave intersection IS NOT 90% of the drivers’ destination that is using the bridge daily. Likewise the City of Gulf Breeze is not the destination of the vast majority of the drivers headed east bound. This is the time to consider future needs and consider the ultimate destinations, NOT just getting people across the bay. Please expand the impact area to include I-110 traffic and the intersection on Bayfront Pkwy at Chase Street, as well as 17th Avenue. I could envision a beautiful cloverleaf with ingress and egress from 17th Ave, Bay Front, Chase and Gregory Streets. Let’s get innovative and come up with a great 2030 plan and make sure the replacement piece
in 2016 can be easily tweaked to accommodate electronic tolls and multiple points of entry and exits especially on the northern end. By the way, RSH has done a great job of listening and trying to get the message out to many residents and businesses as possible. Good guys and very professional. I don’t believe FDOT could have done any better! There needs to be enough facts gathered so that we do not make a decision now on the bridge replacement only that will not accommodate the ultimate corridor that we want and or need in 2035 and beyond. If FDOT provides those facts for inclusion in the decision making for the point A to point B bridge replacement that is being funded through Federal funds, then a toll may be palatable if it is a reasonable toll and local resources have a direct say about the toll setting process unlike the arrangement FDOT entered into with the Garcon Point bridge fiasco.

Thanks much,
Jim and Tommie  
(Richards, 10/5/11)

Response:
Your input is greatly appreciated and will be taken into consideration.

Comment:
1. Build to accommodate today’s and the future’s needs
2. Design for aesthetics – make it beautiful
3. Be cognizant of local icons and vistas
4. The community should be willing to pay for it
5. Consider bikes, pedestrians, and HOVs  
(Robinson, 10/5/11)

Response:
Both 4-lane and 6-lane configurations are currently under consideration for the new bridge. Traffic growth and land development, among other things, are being taken into account in determining the ultimate lane configuration. Making the bridge friendly to alternative modes of transportation is important to the Department. This includes providing a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. Features such as lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks are being considered in the design of the new bridge. Also, improving the iconic status of the Pensacola Bay Bridge is important to the region. This project is an opportunity for such a change. It will be considered in the design process.
6.2 Comments and Responses From Corridor Alternatives Meeting (October 18, 2011)

Comment:
Central West is obviously the only real option, less shoreline, Right-of-Way, Pensacola fishing Pier intrusion. Also leaving the old bridge is a liability that the county and cities of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze cannot absorb. Cheaper over the long haul for Gulf Breeze to build a new pier than continue to maintain old bridge. Three lane traffic each way is probably mandatory to maintain an acceptable traffic level (for future increase in value due to residential expansion in the Midway area.) I am worried about increase in traffic through Gulf Breeze and lack of traffic segregation (flow thru vs. local) which will increase accident volume in the city. A comprehensive traffic plan for the city needs to be addressed to deal with knock-on resulting traffic concerns. (Manson, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Department will work closely with the local municipalities and county governments regarding their continued maintenance of the existing bridge should they choose to use it as a recreational facility. The cost of maintaining the existing Pensacola Bay Bridge as a fishing pier versus constructing a new fishing pier will be considered. The Department has completed the future traffic analysis and has determined that a six lane bridge (three lanes in each direction) will be needed to provide sufficient capacity for the forecasted traffic in the year 2040.

In conjunction with the Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study, the Department is conducting a study of U.S. 98 through Gulf Breeze that will identify issues related to the six-laning of the bridge. Improvements to access management, signal timing and turn lanes will be suggested to maintain traffic flow through Gulf Breeze.

Comment:
Best alignments are Central East and Central West. Concerns: Provide a connection to both bicycle lane and multiuse path coming off bridge for bike/ped (2) provide crossing under ends of bridge for bike/ped. Preserve existing bridge (1 side) for a bicycle, pedestrian, emergency vehicle bridge. (Pulley, 11/17/11)

Response:
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. Connections for the paths on the bridge will be tied into the similar existing features outside of the study limits. The Department will consider bicycle and pedestrian crossings under the approaches of the bridge where crossings are logical.

The Department is not able to consider preserving the existing bridge as a continuous structure due to the limited height over the channel. If the existing structure is preserved for a fishing pier or other recreational activities, the center portion or “the hump” would be removed to allow for a minimum of 65 feet of clearance.
Comment:
Favor the Central West approach to Gulf Breeze. Overall good planning with good alternatives (Williams, 11/17/11)

Response:
Thank you for your comment related to the above referenced project. The Department of Transportation will take your input under consideration and your comment will be included in the public record.

Comment:
There is a better corridor alternative – it accommodates the greater radius idea and makes equally accessible from the bridge coming to/from Pensacola the East as well as the West sides of Pensacola. That location is at “T” Street near Sander Beach Community Center and Landfair in Gulf Breeze at the west end of Gulf Breeze – high up above the water line. During hurricane evacuations the bridge has been closed too early causing risk to those trapped on the GB side. During Ball Park events the bridge location at the SBC Center would reduce traffic through Pensacola. I think spending more $ at this corridor location is a waste. (Stoudenmire, 11/17/11)

Response:
The current study is a “bridge replacement” study with Federal Highway Administration agreed upon project limits that preclude this study from examining a bridge relocation alternative.

Comment:
Connection under bridge on 98 connecting Wayside Park to other side. Also, continue to have a safety feature under railroad tracks on 17th ave for safety walking and biking. Thanks (Mayall, 11/17/11)

Response:
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. Connections for the paths on the bridge will be tied into similar existing features outside of the study limits. The Department will consider bicycle and pedestrian crossings under the approaches of the bridge where crossings are logical.

Comment:
1. Connection under bridge Hwy 98 to connect Wayside Park with both sides – Duh!
2. Run walk/bike lane under RR 17th St to connect from Wayside Park with 17th St Park next to water – Duh! (Cunningham, 11/17/11)

Response:
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. Connections for the paths on the bridge will be tied into similar existing features outside of the study limits. The Department will consider bicycle and pedestrian crossings under the approaches of the bridge where crossings are logical.
Comment:
The new Bay Bridge should be paid for by “Tolls” – user funds as well as DOT funds (Swiebel, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State.

Comment:
Please do not change all our lives by tolling the whole bridge. IF you have to, just toll a speed land or by-pass. (Landfair, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State. The toll study will consider the possibility of installing a toll on the entire new bridge as well as on just the new capacity (lane).

Comment:
Appreciate your input! #97 Baybridge Drive. Six Lanes are needed! (Deuel, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Department has completed the future traffic analysis and has determined that a six lane bridge (three lanes in each direction) will be needed to provide sufficient capacity for the forecasted traffic in the year 2040.

Comment:
The east of east central corridor leave less impact on commercial and public park and public safety facilities in Gulf Breeze. The boat ramp on the west side is used for fire rescue response. (Eddy, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Federal Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) legislation provides unique protection for properties that have been designated and are being utilized as parks and recreational facilities. The Federal Highway Administration must demonstrate that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the Section 4(f) land. Any such proposed action must include all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from its use. The Florida Department of Transportation will comply with the provisions of the Section 4(f) legislation for the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project.

Business impacts and impacts to the existing boat ramp will be taken into consideration and minimized, if possible.
Comment:
Do not favor a toll for this bridge. There is no other option for some residents. Will be a major change of life. I vote no toll. (Landfair, 11/17/11)

Response:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been directed by Governor Scott to analyze the potential revenue sources when building major roadways and bridges. As part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project, the FDOT will conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling the bridge would be beneficial to the State.

Comment:
I found the table on accidents & the cause & the number of injuries & deaths very interesting. I moved to Gulf Breeze from Tallahassee in May 2004. Since then I can remember @ least 2 wrecks with deaths. Think both were after 2004. The first was south of the bridge when a south bound car crossed the median & hit some north bound vehicles. They suspected the driver had a medical issue & passed out. The second & more recent event involved a drunk Army Captain heading south in the north bound lanes hit a north bound car – killed both men – the north bound man had just gotten off work @ Wal-Mart – maybe @ midnight or later. So I think there has been 3 plus deaths. (Esry, 11/17/11)

Response:
The data used to create the crash diagram was used from the Department of Transportation Safety Office, Crash Analysis Reporting System (CARS). The Department has realized that not all crashes from local municipalities have been reported using CARS and is gathering supplemental crash data for the previous five-year period.

Comment:
As the owner of Pier One Marina on the Gulf Breeze side and the only private property to be effected to any great extent, I would prefer the East alignment to bypass my property. The two central alignments would cripple my rentals by taking the partly developed parking area. Rather than loose this critical parking area and deal with a continuous parking limitation, I would prefer the West alignment, taking out all three structures, removing the need for parking. (Wheatley, 11/17/11)

Response:
The minimization of business impacts is a priority for the Department. Should the project require any property from your business the Department will be required to provide compensation to you.

Comment:
The study should consider landing points on the Gulf Breeze peninsula outside the current boundaries. I think the ideal approach to Gulf Breeze is at the eastern edge of the Gulf Breeze Hospital/western edge of the National Seashore. This would allow for an interchange capable of handling the high traffic volume we see in Gulf Breeze. The vast majority of the traffic through the city is bound for the beach or...
Tiger Point/Midway areas. As it is now, 55,000 cares needlessly pass in front of 3 schools. By moving the bridge to the east, especially if combined with a future replacement of the Bob Sikes Bridge, we could alleviate the unbearable congestion we see in the city. This would of course necessitate annexing land from the seashore or private land, but it seems to be the only real solution to the traffic flow issues. (Grace, 11/17/11)

Response:
The current study is a “bridge replacement” with project limits in which the Federal Highway Administration has agreed. The bridge replacement funding precludes this study from examining a bridge relocation alternative. Additionally, the relocation of the existing bridge to the east of Gulf Breeze would be difficult due to the protection of this federally designated area. The Federal Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) legislation provides unique protection for properties that have been designated and purchased for natural preservation, and the FHWA must prove that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the Section 4(f) land. Any such proposed action must include all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from its use, and court decisions have been extremely protective of the covenant that Section 4(f) provides.
6.3 Comment and Responses From Public Alternatives Meeting (October 18, 2012)

Comment:
Toll feasibility study should include a managed lane option. Four lane free and two lane reversible. Look at a PPP or Design Build contractor to finance the gap and add aesthetic features. Add a seawall with a Bay walk on each park. Add parking under the approach structure on both sides, Gulf Breeze and Pensacola. Add mid span design element. Add bike/ped lanes. I like the decorative handrails and lighting. *(Adams, 11/13/12)*

Response:
The construction of the Replacement Bridge is planned to take place under a Design Build contract that will be initiated in 2016. Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. Connections for the paths on the bridge will be tied into similar existing features outside of the study limits. The Department will consider bicycle and pedestrian crossings under the approaches to the bridge where crossings are appropriate. Additional parking under the bridge will be considered.

Comment:
I really like Central West Option, seems less disruptive, much prefer 17th Ave fly over seems reasonable for Gulf Breeze. *(Yandle, 11/13/12)*

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover will also be considered in the final selection.

Comment:
Since the current Bridge is not going to be saved and used as a fishing bridge and tourist attraction, it would be a great idea to extend the current fishing pier to allow for more public use and the extension would put the fishermen in better water to be able to catch fish that don’t bed in shallower depths. Also, the fly over is a horrible idea. It opens up the area for development by changing the current D rating to an A and will adversely affect the existing residential area. Also, you need to look at the options presented by Vision Pensacola. They have viable alternatives that enhance the designs you currently are presenting. *(Williamson, 11/13/12)*

Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities to explore further enhancements to the project. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas cannot be avoided. As part of the mitigation efforts, the Department of Transportation is also considering using the remains of the existing bridge as an artificial reef.
Comment:
Please expand Project Greenshores around the bridge approaches on both sides to make the area more aesthetically pleasing and to provide mitigation. Please use a toll to help us get a better looking bridge. Pensacola is trying to raise our standards – we cannot accept an ugly bridge across the Bay. Please consider a toll for the entire bridge which is the fairest way by far to pay for it – if you use it, you pay, if you don’t use it you don’t pay. Or consider express lanes with a toll to help fund a better looking bridge. Thanks for considering my comments. (Wagley, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore mitigation opportunities, such as expanding Project Greenshores. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided.

The Department of Transportation is considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

Comment:
I find the “Central West” rendering nicer than the east. Also, “west” preserves the existing fishing bridge. Aesthetics is huge for this community!! This new bridge will be a gateway to both Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. It needs attractive lighting at night-time. (I like the soft blue glow underneath the spans.) We need more than just a plain concrete “aircraft carrier” bridge. Please incorporate beautifying elements into the design. Also, it’s important to have safe bike/pedestrian lanes that connect effectively with the existing paths on both sides. Vision Pensacola has some good ideas that can be incorporated into the design. Please complete a toll feasibility study, too. Vision’s “reversible” toll lanes is worth considering. (Thompson, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. The Department of Transportation is considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and cooperation with local municipalities.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. Concepts presented by Vision Pensacola will be given consideration in the adoption of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
I would like consideration of aesthetics: lighting, focal point, enhancements/signage/cables, pedestrian look out points. Listen to Vision Pensacola. The aesthetics of our bridge, I believe, are important to the beautification and progress of our city. A more eye pleasing bridge will serve as a beautiful gateway into our beautiful beach town. I believe building the bridge on the east side will help
us maintain our view of the sunset which is beneficial to the property owners on the west side. (Terek, 11/13/12)

Response:
Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. Concepts presented by Vision Pensacola will be given consideration in the adoption of the Preferred Alternative. The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
I prefer the flyover approach on the Pensacola end of the bridge, because it is safer, it eliminates the light and all and reduces and improves the flow of traffic. I don’t like the idea of a toll being brought in. I know the millions are not going to move themselves but a toll would back up traffic and infuriate local residents who use the bridge every day and sometimes more than once a day. (Still, 11/13/12)

Response:
Your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover will also be considered in the final selection. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the implementation of a toll on the replacement bridge. If a toll is deemed necessary to meet the shortfall in funding, there will be all electronic toll collection system installed to minimize, or possibly eliminate any additional delays.

Comment:
For the Pensacola approach, I prefer the flyover renderings. It seems much safer. However, I do not think a toll would be fair to the people who live in Gulf Breeze. I commute to Pensacola for work and could not afford to pay a toll every day. (Smithey, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Your concerns will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall.

Comment:
No Tolls! It is not rational to place tolls on the only access between Gulf Breeze and Pensacola. West Central alignment is preferred. Inclusion of the flyover is desirable if additional cost does not add more reasons for financing by tolls. (Sessions, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Your concerns will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall. The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the
Preferred Alternative and your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover will also be considered in the final selection.

**Comment:**
Bike Paths are excellent. Hopefully, Project Greenshores will be minimally encroached upon. It took a long time to get that where it is. Also, destroying a brand new fishing bridge seems irresponsible. And a flyover seems unnecessary. An aesthetically pleasing would be a huge bonus. Why not have an iconic bridge such as the Golden Gate or Brooklyn. *(Schrock, 11/13/12)*

**Response:**
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are planned to be accommodated with a 12 foot multi-use path on each side of the bridge. The Department of Transportation is considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore mitigation opportunities, such as expanding Project Greenshores. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided.

**Comment:**
1) Concerns regarding overpass, Pensacola side, aesthetics.
2) Grave concerns related to toll and impact on the residents, families, businesses – alternatives please (sales tax?) *(Schiska, 11/13/12)*

**Response:**
The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Your concerns will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

**Comment:**
Choice Central East Alternative flyover. Provide connection/access for bicyclist to path coming off of bridge on Pensacola end to avoid right turning traffic to 17th. Provide trail connection under CSX RR track through parking lot of boat ramp on 17th. *(Pulley, 11/13/12)*

**Response:**
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference and your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Your concerns for bicyclists will be explored to provide a safe transition from those crossing the bridge on the shoulder. Coordination with the City of Pensacola will be completed to consider a connection to the 17th Avenue boat launch area.
Comment:
The east side construction would be best for the businesses at the base of the bridge. It will provide more parking for the businesses like the Bridge Bar and the two behind the hotel that is under construction now. We need more parking in that area for those businesses. Parking under the new bridge on land is good for the existing businesses also. I personally like the EAST side approach for the new bridge. (Pope, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Additional parking under the bridge will be considered where feasible.

Comment:
Overall love the set of options you have winnowed down to. However, I do not like the 17th Avenue flyover – too high and would still require a light – the current configuration will be acceptable even in greatly increased traffic. Although the current plan has nice aesthetic elements I really want some bolder and more comprehensive elements per the “signature bridge” idea. The plans for approaches and deck layout are great. (Odom, 11/13/12)

Response:
Your preference for the 17th Avenue at-grade scenario will be considered in the final selection. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

Comment:
I appreciate the thought and efforts of the teams involved. My preference would be not to have the overpass at the 17th entrance going to G.B. I worry about those who don’t keep to speed limits. (Odom, 11/13/12)

Response:
Your preference for the 17th Avenue at-grade scenario will be considered in the final selection.

Comment:
Reimburse Escambia County $12-15,000,000 for the new fishing pier that has been recently built or leave it alone and move Bridge west the side of the old Bridge. Use rubble for artificial reef program to be disposed in Gulf LARS areas. (Mynick, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore mitigation opportunities, such as expanding Project Greenshores or enhancing off-shore reef areas. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided. If impacts must occur, the Department of Transportation is committed to minimizing those impacts and providing adequate mitigation.
Comment:
NOT TOLL, NO TOLL, NO TOLL. It will have a detrimental impact on businesses on both sides of the bridge including beach businesses which will in turn cause unemployment, layoffs. It will also hurt those who can least can afford it. Need to get news agency notice enough to put info out in time. Central East is I think the less impactful to businesses and employees. There is a new deck connection to the Bridge Bar that should stay; it will hurt businesses if gone. Protect wetlands in Greenshores. (Moore, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Your concerns will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall. Your Alternative preference will be considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore mitigation opportunities, such as expanding Project Greenshores. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided.

Comment:
After living in Gulf Breeze for 35 years, we are very familiar with the challenges presented by bridge traffic and its impact on residents and businesses. The best plan is the “flyover” plan and the more westerly position which keeps the fishing bridge. (Miller, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative in conjunction with your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover.

Comment:
My number one concern is cost. However, we are in a unique opportunity to capitalize on lower cost than in a boom market. I would strongly encourage taking advantage of such a great opportunity to capitalize lower cost of beautifying the bridge now rather than later or at least providing for future ability as economic means provide. Strongly believe central east is best. Strongly believe in aesthetic lighting. Most important is an efficient use of money at lowest overall cost as possible. DO NOT IMPACT EXISTING PRIVATE PROPERTY. (Matthews, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows.
Comment:
I don’t think this bridge should come into GB at the proposed point of entry at all! I have attended these meeting for the past 2 yrs. We were told that studies showed the over 60% of all traffic coming into GB from Pensacola were heading east of GB proper for other reasons; not to be in GB at all. I have attended City Hall meetings where planners told us their plans of how they are going to change the appearance, no roads, etc. to make GB feel like a downtown area. This will cost taxpayers millions only to benefit those who reside there, still leaving us with the same traffic congestion problems we face today with the bridge coming through the center of our community. I propose redirecting the bridge to enter at the west edge of the Live Naval Oaks Area and allowing Gulf Breeze to become a “destination city” vs. a “pass through town”. The millions that will end up being spent trying to appease the people of GB would be better spend building the extra frontage it will take to bring it in down the highway. I have written out all the pros and cons of this and the pros outweigh the cons. I also am aware that federal land can be traded out. Thank you.  
(Lennon, 11/13/12)

Response:
This project is a Bridge Replacement Project and must utilize the existing corridor to be considered for Bridge Replacement funds. A previous study was completed that analyzed various alternatives, including the eastern terminus of the bridge in the Naval Live Oaks area. The previous study did not recommend the possible new location alternatives that were studied, nor was a consensus of support achieved.

Comment:
Using Pensacola – central west (Flyover) would leave the existing fishing bridge and allow for a more tourist friendly wayside park. (Hicks, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative in conjunction with your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover.

Comment:
The Pensacola Bay Bridge needs to be an “iconic” design that has architectural character. The design should project the image of Pensacola and Gulf Breeze and its significant history. This is the first impression many will have of our city! It needs to be magnificent! (Grundhoefer, 11/13/12)

Response:
Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

Comment:
I like central west! The flyover is excellent!! What is the plan for access to the businesses and condos on the Gulf Breeze side? (Grier, 11/13/12)
Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative in conjunction with your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover.

The Central West Alternative allows for access to US 98 for the existing businesses and the Bay Bridge Condominiums. The Department of Transportation will consider the safety of motorists when analyzing the type of access that will be included in the project. The final recommendation for access will be incorporated in the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
Design aesthetics are important to Pensacola. We want improved approaches, improved span and we want DOT to complete a toll feasibility study for this facility. We want a bridge you could put on a post card. We want an iconic facility for our community. (Gray, 11/13/12)

Response:
Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities.

Comment:
We need to focus on bringing more aesthetic value to the Gateways of Gulf Breeze and Pensacola. My proposed thoughts are as follows: Gateway Signage: lit, large type on either side of the bridge or above the gateways in the form of lit walkways; Creating span/height with cables, etc.; lighting under, throughout the bridge; foliage/landscape: increased parking on the Pensacola side; recreational spots, look out points on and at the foot of the bridge. Also, build the bridge Central East. No retaining wall in front of the welcome center. (Gottlieb, 11/13/12)

Response:
Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and cooperation with local municipalities. Your Alternative preference will be considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
1) Prefer Central West Approach vs. Central East BUT: Prefer “Old West” approach because it is the only approach that will allow a left turn out of Baybridge Condos.
2) PLEASE NO TOLL: Will strangle Gulf Breeze economically. Will hurt businesses on both sides of bridge AND lower property values in Gulf Breeze because it is a bedroom community to Pensacola. (Goodroe, 11/13/12)
Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Safety is a major consideration when analyzing whether a “left-out” access will be granted. The final recommendation for access will be incorporated in the Preferred Alternative.

The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Your concerns will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall.

Comment:
We must not settle – let’s fight for iconic central span, review managed lanes as options for toll, need to address impacts to Wayside Parks to improve Baywalk and boat ramp access. Need entrance elements. Like concept of Vision Pensacola boards. (Dana, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore mitigation opportunities, such as expanding Project Greenshores and improving the Wayside Parks. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided.

Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. The Department of Transportation is carefully considering the use of a toll to meet the projected shortfall in funding. Aesthetic features will be considered based on available funding and in cooperation with local municipalities. Concepts presented by Vision Pensacola will be given consideration in the adoption of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
NO FLYOVER! We should NOT be encouraging increased traffic flow to the bridge via 17th Ave/East Hill (a residential neighborhood). Also, Pensacola is on the move – we need and deserve a more attractive span, not just another plain unattractive causeway. More architectural or lighting features are needed. NO FLYOVER – MORE ATTRACTIVE BRIDGE! (Cosson, 11/13/12)

Response:
Your preference for the 17th Avenue at-grade intersection will also be considered in the final selection. Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows.

Comment:
I would like to see access to the water for man powered watercraft on the Pensacola and Gulf Breeze approaches of the bridge. Floating decks could be used in the areas that currently have sea walls. Riparian access is very important to all communities. It should be protected and maintained within this project and all future waterfront projects. (Cook, 11/13/12)
Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities and other agencies to explore recreational opportunities for the communities. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas and wetlands cannot be avoided.

Comment:
Not sure how the flow onto and off of 17th Ave. is a winner. Starts off great but fizzes out at trestle. (Many trucks hit trestle)! Maybe leaving old bridge as a backup should not be discarded. Hurricane evacuation is very important to Gulf Breeze residents. Ease of access to our property is vital! We are very excited to see a bike path! Safe! (Chastain, 11/13/12)

Response:
The existing bridge cannot remain due to the placement of the Replacement Bridge. Due to the current and foreseen structural deficiencies in the existing bridge, maintaining it as a backup is not an option. The existing clearance over the channel is also a hindrance as the Replacement Bridge will have a clearance of 65 feet, 10 feet more than the existing bridge.

Comment:
1) Prefer Central East approach over Central West.
2) NO toll bridge. (Chanely, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Your position with respect to a toll will certainly be taken into account when exploring opportunities to meet the funding shortfall.

Comment 1:
Overall Good.
1) Like 17th Ave. flyover concept.
2) Like under lighting concept.
3) Like over height plan.
4) Round about concepts on 17th Ave. side are also interesting.

Comment 2:
Consider the concepts presented by the alternative “Vision” group for the 17th Ave. side – they are worthy of consideration. (Bullock, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative including your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover. Additional aesthetic features, such as decorative handrails, lighting, and mid-span design elements may be incorporated as funding allows. Concepts presented by Vision Pensacola will be given consideration in the development of the Preferred Alternative.
Comment:
Outstanding plan. I prefer the Central West (flyover) since this will eliminate stopping when you are traveling to the beach. (Bowen, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative including your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover

Comment:
We are very excited that a pedestrian walk has been incorporated into the new bridge to be. We are also very happy with the look of 17th Ave. flyover. Great change to take place. Let’s keep beautifying our wonderful city of Pensacola. (Bowen, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative including your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover

Comment:
As part of the mitigation for disrupting the area around the bridge during construction and not saving any of the old bridge for a fishing/tourist attraction how about extending the current fishing bridge. The current one was cut in half in size with a deal with FEMA to use bridge money elsewhere. It would be a good idea for mitigation to extend the fishing bridge back to its past length. Also, make sure that all of the concrete in the old bridge is used as fishing reefs near the over pass in the Gulf. (Anonymous, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will work with the local municipalities to explore mitigation opportunities. Mitigation will be considered when impacts to the existing park areas cannot be avoided. As part of the mitigation efforts, the Department of Transportation is also considering using the remains of the existing bridge as an artificial reef.

Comment:
No flyovers – nothing aesthetically pleasing about them. As little disruption to the existing areas as possible. (Anonymous, 11/13/12)

Response:
Your preference for the 17th Avenue at-grade intersection will also be considered in the final selection.

Comment:
I like the under lighting and option Central West in Gulf Breeze. (Anonymous, 11/13/12)
Response:
Lighting and other aesthetics are being considered where financially feasible. The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
Under lighting, classic advance design. (Anonymous, 11/13/12)

Response:
Lighting and other aesthetics are being considered where financially feasible. The Department of Transportation is working with the local municipalities to enhance the bridge where economically feasible.

Comment:
Why don’t you bring the bridge in at the bottom of 9th Ave. then create a park out of the present roadways off the bridge? (Anonymous, 11/13/12)

Response:
The bridge replacement funding requires the project limits to be contained within the existing bridge corridor. Extending the project limits to 9th Avenue would go well beyond the limits of the bridge replacement and will increase the cost of the bridge replacement, for which a shortfall in funding has already been identified.

Comment:
Please consider 1) fly over to 14th Ave. to divert some traffic off 17th Ave. 2) Central West makes more sense as the “fishing pier” is in place. (Anderson, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment:
Flyover option must be used. I support the west central alignment to preserve the most existing park. Good job with the graphics and explaining alternatives to the public. (Anderson, 11/13/12)

Response:
The Department of Transportation will consider your Alternative preference in the selection of the Preferred Alternative including your preference for the 17th Avenue flyover.

Comment:
Recommend use of LED lighting for both structure and decorative lighting – street lighting, etc. Gulf Coast LED Lighting, LLC, 850 512 0272 www.MESGULFCOASTLEDS.COM. (Andel, 11/13/12)

Response:
Lighting options will be considered based on lifecycle costs, aesthetics, and consistency throughout the project area.
Comment:
Include expanded project Greenshores on the Gulf Breeze and Pensacola approaches. Include and explain why a reversible, managed lane is not considered. Add parking and revised boat launch facilities on both Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Parks. Add a middle aesthetic span. (Adams, 11/13/12)

Response:
A reversible lane was considered, but rejected due to the directional split of peak hour traffic. A managed lane, i.e. toll lane, was considered as part of the Toll Feasibility Study. The managed lane scenario creates operational challenges at each approach to the bridge. The operational difficulties dramatically reduced the effectiveness of managed lanes, thereby eliminating the potential benefits of a managed lane system. Additional parking under the bridge will be considered where feasible. Aesthetics are being considered where financially feasible.
7.0 Other Public Comments

A number of public comments were received through e-mails, letters, and via the project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com). The following section lists the comments and responses not related to a particular public meeting.

7.1 Comments and Responses from E-mails, Letters, and Project Website

Comment:
I certainly this input is not too late for your consideration, but I highly recommend you evaluate the traffic and patterns as well as the existing roadways an additional three hundred west of the current termination point in the 17th Ave intersection. This would accommodate the full impact of potential lanes coming directly off of Chase Street feeding onto the replacement bridge if placed west of the current structure. The vision would be for two lanes to be elevated off of Chase Street with no light and then a third lane either via light controlled or no light if elevated from 17th Ave traffic as well. The number one option would be to elevate one lane from I-110 directly the new bridge for the most unimpeded traffic flow. I am sure Jim can confirm the heavy flow of traffic during rush hour and most beach event hours as well. (Richards, 03-10-2011)

Response:
Response not provided.

Comment:
Mrs. Betty Fowler of 2420 Bayou Boulevard (850-437-1337) Pensacola, FL 32503 phoned this morning after seeing the PBB PIM advertisement in the paper. She is not physically able to attend the meeting but stated she has ideas concerning the bridge project. I indicated a handout, any material(s) presented at the public information meeting, and a pre-addressed comment form would be mailed to her. Please assist with request, thank you. (Fowler, 07-31-2011)

Response:
Materials will be provided.

Comment:
Would like the material(s) from the public information meeting mailed to him. Thank you. (Soscue, 08-09-2011)

Response:
Meeting materials will be provided.

Comment:
I am listening to the various ideas going around at this stage of development. My biggest concern is the possibility of this becoming a toll bridge. I like many others go across this bridge to go to work every day. This could add up to an astronomical cost for those of us going to work every day and paying a toll, not to mention the back log
of cars to pay a toll. If it were to become like the Garcon Bridge that charges 3.50 +
each way - with jobs scarce and income low it would be detrimental to a lot of people
to use this bridge and we in Gulf Breeze could become trapped in the ability to be
able to afford to drive to work and home. I understand this is an expensive bridge to
build but a toll could be very hard on many people. Yes the beach has a toll but the
majority of people do not “have” to go to the beach every day. The population on the
beach is much less than those that use the Bay Bridge. I hope this type of situation
will have a big consideration before having a toll bridge. *(AmSPacher, 08-11-2011)*

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become
part of the public record.

Comment:
Thanks much to both of you for your interest in hearing the community’s differing
views of the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement. I thought the turnout was great.
The material was well prepared and conveyed the message well. I wanted to put into
writing what I mentioned to several FDOT and RSH Engineers last evening. I keep
telling everyone that there are two views from the Gulf Breeze side of the bridge.
The City of Gulf Breeze is only one and it is significantly smaller than the 46,000
voters east of the City of Gulf Breeze many of whom use the bridge every day of the
work week to commute to their jobs and return home 90% of whom DO NOT stop in
the City of Gulf Breeze. Tommie asked about my thoughts on FDOT needing to
consider a toll arrangement for the replacement bridge. I advised that FDOT would
raise holy terror from the Peninsula residents and beyond if they did not offer some
advantage to converting to a toll system. Some suggestions that I offered for FDOT
consideration, was to at least commission an additional piece to their existing study
and evaluate the value of planning for the next twenty years with a future option of
an elevated lane or two coming directly off Chase Street - no traffic lights -- and
merging onto the new bridge east bound and west bound exist with options for 17th
Avenue and on to Gregory or even I-110. I have explained that the 17th Ave
intersection IS NOT 90% of the drivers’ destination that is using the bridge daily.
Likewise the City of Gulf Breeze is not the destination of the vast majority of the
drivers headed east bound. This is the time to consider future needs and consider
the ultimate destinations, NOT just getting people across the bay. Please expand the
impact area to include I-110 traffic and the intersection on Bayfront Pkwy at Chase
Street, as well as 2 17th Avenue. I could envision a beautiful cloverleaf with ingress
and egress from 17th Ave, Bay Front, Chase and Gregory Streets. Let’s get
innovative and come up with a great 2030 plan and make sure the replacement piece
in 2016 can be easily tweaked to accommodate electronic tolls and multiple points of
entry and exits especially on the northern end By the way RSH has done a great job
of listening and trying to get the message out to many residents and businesses as
possible. Good guys and very professional. I don’t believe FDOT could have done any
better! There needs to be enough facts gathered so that we do not make a decision
now on the bridge replacement only that will not accommodate the ultimate corridor
that we want and or need in 2035 and beyond. If FDOT provides those facts for
inclusion in the decision making for the point A to point B bridge replacement that is
being funded through Federal funds, then a toll may be palatable if it is a reasonable
toll and local resources have a direct say about the toll setting process unlike the arrangement FDOT entered into with the Garcon Point bridge fiasco. (Richards, 08-12-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Has the Florida DOT considered replacing the Pensacola Bay Bridge with a tunnel system? A tunnel system would have at least the following benefits:
• The elimination of potential collisions with a bridge from surface vessels
• Reduced threat from terrorism
  • Easier to secure during extreme threat conditions
• Safe transit during extreme weather conditions
  • No hazard from high winds
  • Ability to transit during tropical cyclone conditions if entries and exits are designed and located properly
• Higher traffic volume with multi-level system
  • General commuter traffic tunnels
  • Commercial vehicles tunnels
  • Public transit tunnels
• Higher traffic volume with multi-route system
  • General commuter traffic tunnels
  • Commercial vehicles tunnels
  • Public transit tunnels
• Green
• Lower maintenance costs
• Longer lifespan
• Greater esthetics
• Increased waterfront tourism potential
• Separate tunnel(s) for utilities making maintenance easier and safer for workers (Goenner, 08-14-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I live in Gulf Breeze and my family uses the 3 mile bridge on a daily basis. The most important aspects to include in a new bridge are a breakdown lane and bike lane. I do not agree with tolls as this is a major thoroughfare. The breakdown lane should ease congestion when an accident or stalled vehicle is on the bridge. I agree that the bridge should be aesthetically pleasing as many tourists use it and it will reflect on the pride of our communities. (Locklear, 08-22-2011)
Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I have heard several different options being explored for the new Pensacola Bay Bridge and would like to provide my comments. New bridge should include 8 lanes of traffic: this will not only accommodate better traffic flow now but also for the future due to growth in population. The larger number of lanes 8 vs. 6 would also serve to provide traffic relief during emergency evacuations. The lanes could be structured so that one lane could be open for emergencies only (evacuations and police, ambulance use). A breakdown line or wide shoulder also needs to be included in the plan both for safety as well as traffic flow relief. I also propose adding a couple of bikes lanes with a barrier for safety. (Kell, 08-23-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
As an avid runner, I would like there to be a safe way for pedestrians to cross the bridge. Also I would like to see 3 lanes in both directions with at least one breakdown lane. (Van Atta, 08-23-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
This bridge is a vital artery to our area. It is imperative that this bridge be funded directly using designated transportation funds and not a toll bridge. We all pay gas taxes which should go toward the construction of our roads and bridges and not be taxed each time we cross a bridge or roadway. Features this bridge should include based on our vast experience with the existing bridge:

1. LARGE breakdown lane. Cars can back up traffic for miles and this bridge is a nexus for car breakdowns.
2. Breakdown lane should be large enough whereas an emergency vehicle(s) can safely drive down to reach wrecked or broken down cars. Currently it takes forever or the emergency vehicles have to drive opposing traffic.
3. Well lighted.
4. Camera and other speed safety devices, at this time when someone enters the bay bridge they automatically add 20MPH to their current speed running over everyone in their path. (Clabaugh, 08-24-2011)
Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I became aware of this link via one of our city council members in Pensacola and would like to submit some things that I would like to see incorporated into the plans for our Bay Bridge.

1. Bike Lanes: There is currently available space for biking but there is continuously a lot of hazardous debris in this area of the roadway. Please considering designated bike lanes along with a solution for keeping these lanes clean if possible.
2. 6 lanes including an HOV Lane: My main consideration for expanding the roadway and including an HOV lane is to minimize congestion and account for growth but mainly in order to minimize bottlenecks during breakdowns/accidents.
3. Sidewalks: Regardless of sidewalks being available or not, people do walk/jog across this bridge. As a runner, it would be nice to have lanes available for runners/walkers...even if half of the walkers are intoxicated on their way home from Pensacola Beach.

I appreciate your time and consideration on these matters during the planning of our Bay Bridge. (Dickens, 08-24-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
We request guarded bike and walk lanes on the new Pensacola bay bridge. It is a shame there is currently no way to cross that bridge except on a motor vehicle. (May, 08-24-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
We want barricaded bike AND walk lanes as a part of the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement. (Sunnenberg, 08-24-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Regarding the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement, PLEASE consider barricaded walking/bike lanes. If you have ever tried to navigate a bridge on foot or bicycle the importance of this would be evident. (Sunnenberg 2, 08-24-2011)
Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I'm glad to see planning is taking place and that the state is asking for comments. I use the Pensacola Bay Bridge both as a motorist and as a biker. My feedback relates to biking. I've found many challenges trying to cross the bridge from either direction. Even with a wide shoulder, bicyclists are too close to traffic. I frequently get honks from vehicles expressing their displeasure having bikes so close. Additionally, there is often debris on the shoulder which poses a hazard to bikers. The main problem is glass or other sharp objects that can puncture tires and cause a biker to lose control, injuring him/herself or even worse to swerve into speeding traffic. If contacted the appropriate state agency previously about the sweeping schedule, but the representative indicated that the frequency of sweeping was cut back due to budget constraints. The ideal situation would be a separated, paved lane that is wide enough to allow walkers, runners, and bicyclists to pass each other comfortably. (Holverson, 08-27-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Concerning tolls on the new bridge, I have lived in Gulf Breeze for 27 years. Property values are already at an all-time low. If a toll is required Gulf Breeze will become a ghost town, and the city of Pensacola will lose consumers that would frequent Malls and restaurants. Not to mention the traffic just getting to and from work will be a nightmare. I travel the FL turnpike frequently to Miami and even with the new overhead sun pass lanes traffic backs up due to people without sun passes and tourists not knowing which lane to use. This region depends greatly on our ability to attract tourists if they need to pay two tolls one for the Bay Bridge and one for Bob Sikes, they will find other places to vacation. We all understand the need for a new bridge- why not consider a portion of the bed tax, personal property tax for all residents in Santa Rosa and Escambia county, an increase of the sales tax, or a combination of some of the above. No one likes increased taxes but a toll would destroy the tourism, property values, and an economic disaster for both Gulf Breeze, Pensacola, and Pensacola Beach. We only need to look to the Garson Point Bridge debacle to see what tolls represent. (Habbage, 08-31-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Your meeting Tuesday night at the Crown Plaza was very informative and I am happy I attended. I have been sharing the information with my neighbors. I believe the Central-West Corridor will have the least impact on Section 4(f) property, as on
residential and business properties as well. It appears to me to be the clear choice and the one that will have the smoothest path to approval. The Central-East is my 2nd choice, but looking at the proposal, it strikes me that the loop comes so close to the East Wayside Park picnic pavilions, that it would not only take away from the enjoyment of these facilities, but also pose possible risks to families and children. The large grassy area is lovely and it is a great place to have a quick picnic getaway on the waterfront. There are always people enjoying the park when the weather is nice. It would be a shame to break it in half. Also, because of the lack of any reasonable alternative to travel back and forth between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze, I don’t feel that a toll is appropriate. Many people make this trip several times a day. I think people would respond better to some form of tax. Of course, we would lose revenue from tourists, so at the least, residents should be able to purchase an annual pass for $75-100 tops. Thank you for your time. Please make the logical choice, the Central-West. (Larkin, 12-08-2011)

Response: Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment: I would like to see the following for the Pensacola Bay Bridge
1. 6 lanes
2. Bike/sidewalks
3. Attractive lighting fixtures
4. Breakdown lanes
5. Warning signs for wrong way entry
Thank you for your time and consideration. (Gill, 10-17-2011)

Response: Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment: Thanks for an informative PAG meeting this week. I wanted to reiterate my comments during the meeting regarding Pensacola’s efforts to activate its waterfront for pedestrian use. The quality of the pedestrian access to the pedestrian lanes on the bridge is very important to the city’s efforts in this regard. Constricting the access on the western side of the bridge in Pensacola would counter the efforts in the works such as creating a linear park from the bridge to downtown by narrowing Bayfront Parkway. In addition, we must look outside the “box” of your study to review the quality of the spaces remaining after the bridge lands. For example, it may be necessary to relocate the visitor center due to lack of parking space or proper access. Also, the intersection at 17th Avenue and the associated traffic flows should be studied and a plan implemented to improve the traffic movement in the area. The light at 17th is a choke point for the community, and a look at how that signal may be removed is desirable. Fly-overs could accomplish this. To accomplish this we should look at all options including relocating the visitor center.
center and the fish and wildlife offices to improve the traffic flow and pedestrian access to the waterfront at the gateway to our city. Please let me know if I can help in any way. Thanks again. (Dana, 11-08-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Putting a toll on the bridge would affect many people in Gulf Breeze and Pensacola because that is the only connection between the two cities. Paying that toll will take away money that working people have only to put them deeper in trouble and if the businesses are paying for it making them lose the money that they had before. Putting a toll on the bridge makes it where people in Gulf Breeze stuck in our city if we don\'t have the money to pay the toll. I strongly believe putting a toll on the bridge is a bad idea. We already have to pay for enough things for our families and it\'s the only way to get anywhere is over that bridge. (Stryker, 12-02-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Tolls for the bridge would impact the community in a bad way. Less people will go to the beach, which will mean less jobs for the surrounding communities. No one will pay two tolls to go to the beach. There is no other access to the Gulf Breeze area that is not ridiculously out of the way. Who does the toll benefit? No one in the community. Loose trust of the people and have a economic meltdown within our community, or do work and get grant and get off your lazy butts. That is the question. There won\'t be a way for people to get to work in Pensacola or Gulf Breeze with a toll. (Ward, 12-02-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I have heard that DOT is considering a toll bridge from Gulf Breeze to Pensacola and I would oppose that idea! I would avoid travel to Pensacola from Gulf Breeze should that occur. Please advise where we may obtain more information regarding that idea? Thank you. (Leonard, 12-07-2011)

Response:
You are correct. We have been directed by our State Secretary to conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling could be used as an alternative method to help fund the bridge replacement project. We anticipate having the toll study complete around the first of February. We will most likely make it available via our website.
(www.pensacolabaybridge.com) once it is final and has been vetted. Thank you for your interest in the project. We will include your comment as a part of the official public record.

Comment:
Mr. Bruner it has come to my attention that when the Pensacola Bay Bridge is rebuilt it could be a toll bridge. Please tell me it isn't so! I certainly hope that is not on the table. Advise please. Thanks! (Parr, 12-07-2011)

Response:
We have been directed by our State Secretary to conduct a toll revenue study to determine if tolling could be used as an alternative method to help fund the bridge replacement project. We anticipate having the toll study complete around the first of February. This is a study to simply determine its feasibility. The decision to toll would come later and be based off a number of things such as, feasibility, receiving PD&E approval, available funding from traditional sources, etc. Thanks for your interest in the project. Let me know if you have further questions.

Comment:
We are glad that we are finally beginning the involved process to replace the Pensacola Bay Bridge. We want the replacement bridge to be built efficiently without spending any extra money to be a “signature” bridge and definitely NOT impose a toll. (Minor, 12-11-2011)

Response:
Thanks Mrs. Minor for your comments. They will become part of our official public record.

Comment:
I would like to voice my strong opposition to a toll bridge that would connect Pensacola & Gulf Breeze. I am a Gulf Breeze resident, and I feel this would dramatically impact our tourism economy and our economic development. Many people in my family travel the bridge for their jobs. Any toll would be hugely detrimental to our economy. (Gunn, 12-12-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
It has come to my attention that the possibility of a toll may be a choice in funding the new bay bridge construction. I wanted to drop a quick line to voice my expressions that I: along with the citizens of Gulf Breeze, are adamantly against a toll bridge. Many people live in Gulf Breeze and must work in Pensacola creating a burden of an expense for daily commuters already facing increasing expenses with the ever rising cost of gas. Just look east to the Garcon Pint Bridge toll and the fact that the county has defaulted on its bonds due to the lack of commuters using that...
bridge. A toll bridge will not be supported by the citizens of Gulf Breeze. (Howard, 12-12-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
As a resident of Gulf Breeze, I am strongly against the idea of making the new bridge a toll bridge. Doing so would create a nightmare on both ends of the bridge. It would deter tourists which would hurt our economy tremendously. It has not worked for the Garcon Point Bridge, what makes you think it would work for three mile? Please reconsider this idea. (Kennedy, 12-12-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Here are some additional ideas to bolster the case for a no-toll new Pensacola Bay Bridge:

1. A toll program would have an enormous overhead. Additional lanes and pavements, housing for management and toll collecting, 24 hour-a-day employment of workers, enforcement tactics, delays for travelers, additional accident causing complexities, and costly land acreage.
2. Regarding land acreage, there simply is none. It is non-existent. No site on either the Pensacola bridge terminus or the Gulf Breeze Bridge terminus has any such acreage. There simply is no space to meet the toll collecting agency’s land requirements.
3. Any such unwanted complex would do great damage to the natural beauty of the Pensacola Bay area. It is a sanctuary for birds, fish, and tropical foliage. The natural beauty should be enhanced by a sleek, photogenic bridge system that can handle the very heavy traffic forced upon the communities by the narrow, peninsular nature of the area. Every square mile of space is extremely valuable, a veritable Manhattan.

Again, please do not consider seriously a toll bridge. The Pensacola Bay area cannot tolerate all the negatives of a toll bridge. (Akkerhuis, 12-13-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
To augment the pensacolabaybridge.com survey, we would like to express our opinion regarding using tolls to pay for a new bridge between Gulf Breeze and Pensacola. The survey should have addressed this issue.
Tolls are for travelers who are willing to pay for a special fast lane or for a less traveled highway parallel to a free congested roadway so that busy hard pressed travelers can reach their destinations quicker and safer. There is no alternative route between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze, so that every traveler between these cities must use the bridge. This bridge is not a route to some resort or airport for use by the elite. It is the sole main street bridge used by everyone who commutes between the two cities. The highway involved is a federal highway (US98) and is supported in the main by federal funds. For any new bridge to be a toll bridge would be an injustice to hard working people who need to go from one of the two cities to the other. In my opinion there would be an outcry in both communities if a toll were to be planned. Please do not consider using tolls to pay for any new Pensacola Bay Bridge. (Akkerhuis 2, 12-13-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I would like to voice my strong opposition to a toll bridge that would connect Pensacola & Gulf Breeze. I am a Gulf Breeze resident, and I feel this would dramatically impact our tourism economy and our economic development. Many people in my family travel the bridge for their jobs. Any toll would be hugely detrimental to our economy. (Walker, 12-13-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Sir, is there any way you can add a question about the possibility of tolling the bridge to the survey? (Landfair, 12-21-2011)

Response:
I think we can get that added. Also, this question will be included on the survey at the Alternatives Public Workshop this summer.

Comment:
I am a local resident in Gulf Breeze Proper. Please do not make this a toll bridge. Many of us work in Pensacola or have to go to Pensacola daily for many various reasons and a toll would put a financial hardship on us. I would prefer to see a less expensive bridge without a toll versus a nicer bridge with a toll. (Herring, 12-23-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.
Comment:
The survey does not address the question of the proposed “toll”. Do not put a toll on this bridge, you will have the same traffic back-up every day all day the same way the beach bridge has at every special week end, from the beach bridge to I-110. It will be the same as an accident and one lane is closed now. Has this been considered or is just done without thought of traffic jams? You have my e-mail send me a comment thank you. (Adams, 12-24-2011)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
PLEASE don’t replace the Gulf Breeze-Pensacola 3 Mile Bridge with a toll bridge. That would add more than $40 a month to my expenses, if the toll was $1. It would KILL Gulf Breeze. I NEVER would have moved to GB if there had been a toll. Our property values would PLUMMET!! I would rather have a cheaper bridge!!! PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE don’t do it!!! (Menk, 12-28-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. We will certainly consider them and they will be documented as a part of the official public record.

Comment:
Where can I get more details to educate myself on this project? In particular, how much will the toll be? (Wilkes, 12-28-2011)

Response:
www.PensacolaBayBridge.com

Comment:
NO toll bridge to Pensacola an absolute NO tolls. (Ball, 12-29-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I was given your name in regards to the possibility of the Three Mile Bridge becoming a toll bridge. I am opposed to this. I will make fewer trips to Pensacola if this happens. I make fewer trips to Milton due to the toll bridge. I carpool with friends and other community organization members with trips to Milton solely due to the cost of the Garcon Point Bridge. This bridge has had fewer trips as the toll has increased. I am sure that a toll on the Three Mile Bridge would negatively affect the businesses in Pensacola as well. (Connor, 12-29-2011)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.
Comment:
A toll bridge to and from Gulf Breeze would be disastrous for the already backed up traffic on US 98. Please come up with a better solution. *(Corte, 12-29-2011)*

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I say **NO to a toll bridge from Pensacola to Gulf Breeze.** If this area has money to hand out to the poor (actually those who have been trained to stay on welfare in their homes with flat screen tv’s, cell phones, etc), then this area can support a bridge to support our community. It’s time to start letting people be responsible and accountable. Time to stop teaching people that they can’t take care of themselves. *(Dickey, 12-29-2011)*

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I am writing this email as a new citizen of Gulf Breeze to voice my concern of the negative economical impact I fear if the Pensacola Bay Bridge is made into a toll bridge.

My husband just got orders to Naval Air Station Pensacola in August. Based on the perfect reputation of the schools in Gulf Breeze we elected to move here instead of Pensacola. My husband is making less due to the decrease in Basic Allowance for Housing rate for Pensacola as well as losing flight pay since his current job does not require regular flight time. In addition, our property taxes on the home we purchased in Gulf Breeze are triple what we paid yearly for our home we owned in North Carolina with the same tax value. If that wasn’t enough we had to register our cars and change our drivers licenses to Florida in order to get a Homestead (our home state of record is Florida). We also had to pay the difference in sales tax on one of our cars and our motorcycle since we just bought them before we moved here. We bought the car and the motorcycle before we knew we were moving to Florida and since North Carolina vehicle sales tax is less Florida required us to pay the difference **EVEN THOUGH** we didn’t buy the vehicles in Florida and we were residences of North Carolina at the time of the sale. Just to take care of the requirements at the DMV we spent over $800.

Through all of the expense we are so very happy we chose Gulf Breeze and we hope to retire here but we are concerned about the possibility of Pensacola Bay Bridge being converted to a toll bridge. My husband and I both work in Pensacola. I would be greatly concerned if we had to sell our home due to new orders. A toll bridge would alter most military families perception of Gulf Breeze as an option for housing while stationed in Pensacola. In addition, a toll bridge would affect business traffic.
to Gulf Breeze. Gulf Breeze businesses would risk closing which ultimately affects not only the appearance but also the economy of Gulf Breeze.

I would like to see Gulf Breeze remain the beautiful, thriving community it is now. I feel that we pay a high enough price to live here. Please don’t allow a toll bridge to replace the Pensacola Bay Bridge. *(Freeman, 12-29-2011)*

**Response:**
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

**Comment:**
They idea of a toll bridge from Pensacola to Gulf Breeze is quite alarming. That bridge is the only way to get to Pensacola without going about 50 miles out of your way. Please think long and hard on this, not to mention that most people in Gulf Breeze work in Pensacola and have to take the bridge twice a day. A lot of us in Gulf Breeze are not wealthy and this would put a burden on us financially. Thank you for listening. *(Dzombar, 01-03-2012)*

**Response:**
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

**Comment:**
I would like to set a meeting with the planning group for the new Pensacola bay bridge. Our property seems to be the only private property that will be effected by the new bridge, and we would like to discuss this process. *(Wheatley, 01-04-2012)*

**Response:**
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

**Comment:**
I am currently out of town on business, but I have heard a lot of talk from friends in town saying that this new bridge will definitely be a toll bridge. Is that true? I have looked online for clarification and cannot find anything saying definitively one way or another. I wish the survey would ask whether people are concerned about it having a toll if that is a possibility... *(Stuckey, 01-05-2012)*

**Response:**
Comment documented for the public record.

**Comment:**
I am very concerned that the Wheatley Group and City Manager of Gulf Breeze are promoting a new development on the west side of the Bay Bridge and they are pushing for an eastern corridor, as evidenced in both the PNJ and GB News. There seems to be a lack of regard for the lovely Wayside Park on both sides of the Bay Bridge, which includes the Welcome Center and new fishing pier. Many people enjoy these facilities. Please don’t destroy the open spaces around these parks, or crowd
them in with traffic. An eastern corridor will affect the quality of life for the 86 residents of Bay Bridge Dr. The noise from the bridge traffic is very noticeable, and to bring the bridge closer will affect our desirability and thus our home values. The Wheatleys and Buz Eddy appear to have no regard for the residents here on Bay Bridge Dr. I personally would love to see a western corridor, but out of regard for the businesses, I feel a central western corridor would be a compromise for all sides and have minimal impact on all parties. It seems like the fair thing to do. I will try to post the link from the front page of today’s GB News. http://www.gulfbreezenews.com/news/2012-01-12/Front_Page/Gateway_could_host_lifestyle_mecca.html (Larkin, 01-12-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
I hope your New Year is going well. Can you (or one of your colleagues) please describe (give an overview) of the reason/need for elevating the proposed bridge (elevation of travel surface as it meets landfall on both the Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Bay side) to a higher proposed elevation (and what those proposed elevation number differentials are between existing and proposed)? (Pinning, 01-17-2012)

Response:
The new bridge will be roughly 12’ higher based off analysis using new storm surge wave action criteria. The new profile will quickly tie back into existing grade after landfall.

Comment:
Can you please supply the discussion notes and question and answers from the above referenced meeting. The only thing available online is the agenda and the color pictures of the proposed corridors and bridge design, which are fabulous. I am able to see the discussion from previous meetings, but cannot find this for the Dec. 6 meeting. We are presenting information this Saturday at our annual Home Owners Association meeting and would like to have this information. Also, there has been some confusion over the month AND year that one corridor will be selected to move forward to the approval process. Can you please clarify that date? Thank you so much for your time and effort in this project. (Larkin, 01-18-2012)

Response:
Meeting minutes from the PAG Meeting will be provided.

Comment:
This is one more voice against a toll on the bay bridge. You’ve undoubtedly heard many objections, but here are mine—Collecting the toll would mean one more traffic delay on the already congested Hwy 98. Consider how far back into Pensacola traffic would be backed up. The toll would increase financial difficulties for service personnel assigned to NAS Pensacola and living in or east of Gulf Breeze. School
organizations (e.g. athletics, music, ROTC, academic clubs) would be impacted. People living in or east of Gulf Breeze needing to go to Pensacola for medical treatment would have one more expense. Businesses on Pensacola Beach would obviously be affected. Aside from the added expense, the frustration caused by traffic delays should be considered. I wonder how many people, visiting the area and trying to get to the beach, would ever come back. \textit{(Meeker, 02-01-2012)}

\textbf{Response:}
Thank you for your comments.

\textbf{Comment:}
Thank you for accepting our input regarding the prospect of a toll on the Pensacola Bay Bridge. Isn’t it enough that we have to pay one toll already? Surely there is another way of paying for this without saddling us with another fee in order to get to Gulf Breeze and to the beautiful beach without charging a toll! Look at the situation of the toll bridge most recently built from Interstate 10 toward Gulf Breeze and see how people feel about TOLLS. I sincerely hope that my family and I as well as all Escambians do not have to pay more to get to the beach. Thank you for listening to our concerns. \textit{(Wilson, 02-01-2012)}

\textbf{Response:}
Thank you for your comments.

\textbf{Comment:}
In considering options for a new bridge connecting Gulf Breeze and Pensacola, please do not make it a toll bridge. We would be held captive and it would reduce the flow of traffic to the beach thus cutting the tourist income to our area. Why does the state not take over the Garcon Point Bridge and reduce the tolls on it so that the locals can afford to use it and thereby reduce the traffic through Gulf Breeze? Please no more toll bridges for us. \textit{(Adams, 02-02-2012)}

\textbf{Response:}
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

\textbf{Comment:}
I understand that the new bridge span will be much larger than the current structure, as it is desperately needed. I also understand that the funding for this project is limited to replacing the current 4 lanes. This will leave a sizeable bill for the additional traffic and multi-use lanes. I don’t have a solution on how to fund this, but I can tell you that I do not want to pay a toll to use this public road. In order to get to Pensacola Beach now, I must pay a toll which will probably increase in the near future. The residents of Pensacola enjoy an occasional trip out there for a meal at one of the many fine restaurants, or attend a beach concert, and I for one, will certainly think twice before I get in the car and spend what I presume would amount to about $5.00 total if a toll is implemented to get there. I feel certain that business owners in and around Gulf Breeze, and those on Santa Rosa Island will not be supportive of a new toll bridge. I urge you to hold a public forum to discuss this. Thank you for your attention. \textit{(Adcox, 02-02-2012)}
Response:

Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:

Thousands of us local residents travel that bridge two-four-six times a day. Please do not delay our trip by having to stop for a toll. The Pensacola Beach Bridge is bad enough for delays: this would be many times more annoying. Also, how about the state buying the Garcon Point bridge. I live in Gulf Breeze. Most of us would take the Garcon bridge for all points east if it wasn’t for the $3 toll, matter of principal more than $. We have more than 5,000 employees. Lots of them live down Hwy 98 all the way to Navarre, and would prefer to take the Garcon Bridge to I-10, into Pensacola. Thanks for your consideration. There was a good editorial in the Pensacola News Journal yesterday that said you were welcoming input! (Brownell, 02-02-2012)

Response:

Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:

Please PLEASE assure me that there will NOT be a toll bridge across Pensacola Bay between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. They are like two adjacent cities, neighboring communities. A toll bridge would stifle business (Gulf Breeze and Pensacola each forming their own local businesses to avoid paying a bridge toll), tourism would take a heavy hit (people would find another beach area that was less expensive to access). The traffic at the toll booths would bring unnecessary congestion to Gulf Breeze – and possibly Pensacola also. There isn’t space for toll booths at either end of the bridge landing. I believe it would be bad idea, on many levels, to pursue the plan of a toll bridge between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. (Herrick, 02-02-2012)

Response:

Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:

I would like to express my opposition to the proposed plans to rebuild the Pensacola Bay Bridge and place a toll on the bridge.

I live in the East end of Gulf Breeze, several miles down Highway 98 near the “bankrupt” Garcon Point Toll Bridge.

If a toll is placed on the new bridge, there will be absolutely no way to travel to Pensacola, the main employment city for our town without paying a toll.

We can travel across the Pensacola Bay Bridge or across Garcon Point Bridge ($3.75 one way). The only other option is to drive East to State Road 87 (approximately 12
miles) and then north to I10 and then back west to Pensacola --- many miles and time out of our way.

My daughter lived in Orlando, FL for a year while in college. While the State has many tolls on the highways, you have alternative options to get to your destination without paying a toll. We will not have such an option as we are surrounded by water – Pensacola Bay & Santa Rosa Sound.

With the condition of the economy, the citizens in our area do not need another never-ending tax / toll on our daily lives!!! (Jarrett, 02-02-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take our online toll survey.

Comment:
A toll on this bridge would be simply another job killer. We are a close community with Escambia and Santa Rosa counties sharing our beautiful beaches, National Seashore and business customers. A toll on the bridge would be another tax on businesses struggling to maintain in an unsure economy. This would further separate our counties and cost millions in lost tourism. Why pay two tolls to come and go on Pensacola Beach when competing sugar white sand beaches are free to explore cities and spend dollars. Businesses counting on tourism will board their doors. Businesses that cross sell the counties will also descale their efforts or shut their doors. Unemployment in both counties will sky rocket and cost the tax payer more as the lost wages are absorbed into the county tax budget. I live in Escambia County and own my company in Santa Rosa County. I travel that bridge to eat out, conduct business, see friends, attend community meetings and go to/from work. A toll would make me consider closing my company and laying off employees. The numbers just would not work for me any longer. (Woodall, 02-02-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take our online toll survey.

Comment:
My husband and I are residents of Alabama but own a secondary home in Gulf Breeze, FL. I strongly object to a toll bridge from Pensacola to Gulf Breeze. We don’t use the toll bridge (which is very handy for us) at Garcon Point. The cost is too high. I would not go into Pensacola shopping if I had to pay a toll to go over the bridge. I also am concerned about the families who take their kids to the beach. They would have to pay a toll to get to Gulf Breeze and then another one at the Bob Sikes Bridge to get to Pensacola Beach. I think this would be bad for business in Escambia county as well as Santa Rosa county. I don’t know what the answer is, but I do know a toll bridge is not it. (Beard, 02-03-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
The reason I am against tolls, is because I spent a fair amount of time in the Jacksonville area when they had toll on the river bridges. What a choke point. When the tolls were removed it was like adding two to four new lanes. Anything but tolls!!! (Bellows, 02-03-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
Let me please open with..I STRONGLY OPPOSE TOLLING the Pensacola Bridge. What I actually want to say is “are you crazy? A toll will KILL business in Gulf Breeze and destroy any property values.”

I am a business owner in Gulf Breeze. Not only do I own my business but I own the two buildings that house it in Harbortown. The tolling of the bridge will KILL any of the Pensacola business that I might have had. Daily, my store, Elite Repeats & Boutique, has people who come from Pensacola to shop. Some people come from Perdido to eat at the Greek restaurant and then shop at my store. I can guarantee that the tolling of the bridge would end that trip...they told me so when they were in the store last week. In this time of economic strife, high unemployment etc, I would hate for the DOT's decision to toll the 3 mile bridge cause my business to falter, thus putting 5 employees on the street and then my buildings diminishing their value. These buildings and my business are my retirement plans. Unfortunately, and not to be a wet blanket, I see that happening to many businesses if the toll comes to fruition.

So what other plans can I provide? I am still pondering this but I will point out an example of how a toll bridge has failed. Let us look no further than the Garcon Point Bridge which has now defaulted on its loan due to poor financial planning AND ridiculously high tolls. Many people in Gulf Breeze wonder at what point will the “set toll” on the Pensacola Bridge stop increasing? What's to stop the bridge authority/FDOT from increasing the toll further suspending traffic to Gulf Breeze and the beaches? There a lots of people who commute to and from Pensacola/Gulf Breeze on a daily basis...look at the bridge traffic counts. Can you imagine the additional cost a Gulf Breeze resident who works in Pensacola OR the Pensacola resident who works in Gulf Breeze will have? How about the commuter student at Pensacola State? What about the students from Gulf Breeze High School who are enrolled in the Dual Enrollment program thru either Pensacola State College or the University of West Florida travelling back and forth daily to class? No quarter, no class!

I really think the placing of a toll on the 3 mile Bridge is a BAD, BAD idea for the FDOT. I can guarantee that it is highly unpopular in Gulf Breeze AND Pensacola. Surely there is a better way. While I am totally opposed to any additional taxes (we are an over taxed bunch as it is) I am guessing that an additional sales tax/...
tax/etc. would be better than an increased property tax to help fund the bridge. How do you determine which city would pay the higher taxes? If you are a “Pensacola” resident but reside in Warrington, you would not feel that you should pay higher property taxes to fund a bridge “so far away”. There has to be a better way. This is not really just a Gulf Breeze issue. It’s a Pensacola Bay Area issue. Think of the new baseball stadium being built in Pensacola. Paying a toll to travel to and from a game, in addition to the cost of the game tickets, etc. may cause a family to cancel their plans of attending a function in Pensacola and vice versa.

I blame the state for not thinking ahead. It comes as no surprise that the bridge, which is maintained by the FDOT, is aging and will need replacement. I am sure that the FDOT had to have had a plan long ago for replacing a bridge built in 1960! If not, why was it not a priority? Why was a fund not established after the barge hit the bridge in 1989 which brought to light the need for a plan b for the bridge? Just think how much money would have been saved in those 20 years! Instead, it’s a knee jerk “oops, gotta replace it and the citizens have to pay for it” reaction. I think this was bad planning! As they say, it’s easier to kick the can down the road..... As I sit here and type this to you, I have come with an alternative that may work just as well as the toll: pray for a hurricane to knock a section of it down and then use federal money for the replacement.

Thank you for your time. Once again, just in case you have not figured this out: NO TOLL on the Pensacola 3 mile Bridge! (Compton, 02-03-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
Please have designers look at the Hwy 90 Bridge that was replaced over the bay in Biloxi MS. It is user friendly, both pedestrian and drivers, a magnificent structure, and a real plus for travelers on US 90. It would be a beautiful introduction to the West Florida beaches from the western gateway. (Howe, 02-03-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. We will document your suggestion.

Comment:
Let me inform you that the majority of the folks that are directly impacted by the traffic volume along 98 here in the Southern part of Santa Rosa county, are in strong favor of county improvement projects that has a system in place of a “pay as you go” scenario, and not let the costs fall on our children by using bond monies.

No one has to be told along 98, that the problem here along 98 is known as “traffic volume”. One of many solutions is to put a electronic Toll system on the Bay bridge and let the users pay for the improvement.

Another solution is to rout traffic along 87 North/South bound (4 lanes are being build) and away from 98. I suggest that you not be so quick on the draw to using
“Bond” money as we in this county have a real bad experience with the Garcon Bridge that we seem to not be able to control the toll charge on, due to the use of this “bond” funding. It seems that a bond holder in upstate New York sets the cost of tolls on the Garcon Bridge.

Recommend that if we don’t have the money for this replacement Bay Bridge, we postpone or close the bridge since it will impact safety issues in the future. Also, do not just consider the access to the Escambia County “Gold mine”, known as Pensacola Beach but also make a recommendation for the Traffic management along 98 here on the South end. (Swieble, 02-03-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
Please don’t put a toll bridge over Pensacola Bay between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. There is already one at Garcon Point that is a failure. (Schurger, 02-06-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
We have heard a toll may be placed on the proposed new Pensacola Bay Bridge. This would be a real and instant economy killer! It is the ONLY way to get between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. Many people live on one end of the bridge and work on the other. The local traffic is hugh with daily trips by many. It would cut off Pensacola Beach from Pensacola and would hurt the tourist business on the beach. Using this bridge is not an optional route—it is the only route. Other funding is needed to keep this state highway accessible to the public with NO TOLL. (Ascherfeld, 02-13-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
I have no idea if you are the correct person to address this to...but. My husband and myself could possibly cross the Pensacola Bay Bridge 4 to 6 times a day taking kids to functions, see family, participate in sporting events, work events and a toll would put a financial hardship on our family. Not to mention the traffic back up that would be caused from people commuting to Pensacola from Gulf Breeze to work on a daily basis, have you seen that traffic back up without having to slow down for a toll booth??? ...I have. I really think a sales tax would be better for all citizens especially those who cross that bridge multiple times a day. (Doyle, 02-15-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

**Comment:**
Many veterans have to cross the well-built bridge. I doubt if modern bridge builders could match the expertise of the original workers in 1960. Does your survey state it is going to fall to pieces within six years. A couple of years ago I had to drive over the bridge 6 times a week just to make 3 VA appointments per week, now I only have to go once a week but with the way gas prices keep going up, I bought a motorcycle to help me save on gas prices, now it seems that was a waste. I'm glad I'm 60 years old now and want have to put up with the future from uneducated politicians. But no problem, I have studied God's Word and we are in the end times. Not only is America screwed up economically, but Europe is too. All due to communist China’s cheap production line. I have bought almost a dozen rain suits this past year and each fall apart after a couple of uses. The old American made ones would last for decades. And I didn’t pick the cheap ones, I picked the most expensive hoping they’s last. They don’t. *(Renfroe, 02-16-2012)*

**Response:**
Comment documented for the public record.

**Comment:**
When the bridge is replaced increasing the vessel clearance to 65 feet would be a definite advantage for sailboats. *(Milne, 02-17-2012)*

**Response:**
Comment documented for the public record.

**Comment:**
How many more ways are you going to run our potential visitors/businesses to another town (i.e. Mobile, etc) you now want to burden not only the visitors/tourists but the long term tax payers in Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. We are TAXED TO DEATH now. I a native Pensacolaian since 1942 on live only on Social Security and now you want to burden the seniors with a toll if they just want to drive to Gulf Breeze or Pensacola Beach. We are NOT a BIG TOWN with lots of attractions (like Dallas, TX) so why are you wanting to run what potential visitors/businesses completely away PERMANENTLY? RECONSIDER this ridiculous idea. WHO BY THE WAY WAS THE PERSON WHO FIRST SUGGESTED THIS IDEA? I NEED TO KNOW FOR THE NEXT ELECTION. *(McIntosh, 02-18-2012)*

**Response:**
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

**Comment:**
Well said Joe and Janet. I think you speak for the majority of Pensacola, Escambia County, and Santa Rosa County residents. Case in point, the financial disaster called Garcon Point Bridge. It reached its’ point of resistance almost immediately. I can afford it and I always drive around the Scenic Hwy route like most everyone
that I speak to. We do not want to be a South Florida or California with Toll Roads, especially in this time of personal economic struggle for most families. We can make a difference! (Rotenberry, 02-19-2012)

Response:
Thank you all for your comments. If you haven't already, I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
I think you will find that our area is almost petrified to have a toll placed on this new bridge. We are all aware of the Garcon Point Bridge and the toll being 3.50 EACH WAY and increases all the time while still going broke! Of course this is due the cost! There are very few people who can afford to cross 3 mile bridge at least twice per day to go to work. Most of us are just trying to make ends meet with no extra funds to pay tolls. This would be a huge hurt to the economy and people in this area. The budget for this needs to be strictly enforced and watched without excess spending along the way and the only fair way for any local help to pay this would be a small sales tax that would be taken off the books once the debt is covered. (Amspacher, 02-23-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
I oppose any toll on Bay Bridge but would be in favor of sales tax increase to help fund project. (Harshman, 02-27-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
I just finished the on-line bridge toll and feel it doesn't ask enough questions. Understandably 100 questions would not satisfy most of the people around here. I HAVE to use this bridge several times a day, no matter what the toll would be. Most of the residents in Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Beach are in the same position. My job as a real estate appraiser does not allow me option of avoiding the bridge. Also, my fees cannot go up because my costs do. If my clients don’t understand that gas prices have impacted me, they won’t understand a local toll. I understand the money has to come from somewhere. In the event there is no other option BUT a toll, I would BEG the state to consider giving the residents a bridge pass or transponder to use at a significantly reduced rate. Additionally, I have lived in Gulf Breeze for over 40 years and seen the traffic through Gulf Breeze at peak hour/peak season. I cannot imagine what a toll would do. (Timmons, 02-27-2012)
Thank you for your comments.

Comment:
I and my family are natives of Pensacola and are shocked that your committee would even consider a toll on the 3 mile bridge. We have been getting along just fine all these years (70 for myself) without a TOLL FEE. I have friends and relatives that live in Dallas, Texas that are Pensacola Beach visitors every June for more than 2 weeks. Each time they come, they bring other families with them to enjoy the sites and most of all the beautiful beach. They all spend a lot of money visiting the beach and the different sites in the city of Pensacola. That will certainly be a factor as to IF they continue to make this their vacation site in the future.

As difficult as it is in this sluggish economy, looks like the powers that be would do everything they could to encourage visitors instead of mirroring the BIG CITIES that they are trying to get away from. I know that Dallas has toll after toll after toll. Is that what they can expect from Pensacola just trying to get back and forth to the beach and the city?

There are many ways to TAX US TO DEATH than paying tolls every 3 miles.
PLEASE LEAVE OUR BEAUTIFUL CITY ALONE AND ENCOURAGE VISITORS AND TOURISTS TO COME TO PENSACOLA.
(McIntosh, 02-28-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
I am a federal worker at nattc branch health clinic NAS Pensacola. I am sure a bridge new is well overdue. A toll would be a hardship on folks like me. I travel 2 times a day and that’s 5 days a week. Fancy decorating is not needed. The traffic was heavy only during tourist season. Now every day is like that. Bloody 98 for sure. I have been hit twice due to speeding and traffic backed up due to the bridge being outdated. Joan C White/dept of defense. (White, 02-28-2012)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. I encourage you to visit our project website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) and take the online toll survey.

Comment:
Please let me make some personal comments regarding your Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement project.

I, personally, think that 10 feet would be more than ample for two bicyclists to pass each other on the multi-use lanes. I think the coast of the bridge could be reduced if the excessive two feet were eliminated. Alternatively, I think those two feet could be better used to widen the shoulders or the driving lanes. The federal standard of twelve feet, I think, should be questioned and perhaps challenged.
The federal requirement to, at almost all cost, preserve public and wildlife land, I believe is a policy of valid forethought. With the extreme population growth we apt to see, all such lands will eventually be crowded beyond enjoyment. Therefore, they should indeed sacrosanct henceforth.

Water quality is impacted by bridges from runoff that a gutter system could help alleviate.

Asphalt is far more polluting than concrete and must be continuously repaved. It will be more costly over the life of the bridge. Please do not use asphalt.

Water quality is, also, impacted by bridged altering the flow of the natural water currents and tidal flushing. It would be helpful to place the new bridge as far away as possible from fishing piers. Tearing down what taxpayers just paid dearly to construct would be unappreciated in the first magnitude. It would needlessly disturb our toxic sediments to remove and rebuild the pier.

The smaller the pilings the bridge could have, the better for water quality. One set of pilings for a single bridge having both directions of traffic would be better than two sets for the separate directions. Could a bridge like the ones in the northern areas of the US that have layers on a single set of supports be used? That would also be helpful. That would, at least, during construction, reduce the amount and perhaps the duration of the disturbance of our toxic sediments. It would allow for the maximum flushing of the bays and the bayous of all the proposals. Bayou Texar on the Pensacola end of the bridge is so polluted and the sediment so toxic that people get ill from contact. The tidal flushing is now impacted by the current bridges and pier. A single set of pilings there as narrow as safety dictates all the way to the bottom is a real need.

Regarding the four mapped bridge ends, I would appreciate if you would take into account my in considering the eventual decision.

- **East**: Taking public lands is a bad choice. Removing the newly built fishing pier is a wasteful choice. Impacting the visitor center is a tourist unfriendly choice.
- **East Central**: This routing is only marginally an improvement over the east corridor. All the negatives still exist except tearing down the fishing pier. That problem is just exchanged for the one of too many obstructions too close together, which impacts the flow of water currents and tidal flushing in a particularly polluted confluence of the bay and Bayou Texar.
- **West**: This scenario has the same problem of taking public recreation and green space lands. While it has the advantage of moving the obstruction to currents and tidal flow as far as possible, it is doubtful that it is enough to make a major difference – particularly if there are two sets of pilings. On the Gulf breeze side the impact on existing businesses is of concern. Could a slight S-curve alleviate that situation?
- **Center West**: This choice preserves the parks. It moves the current and tidal flow obstructions at least a little distance, albeit that no proposed choices be apt to be sufficient to eliminate the negative impacts. It appears to be less
disruptive to the Gulf Breeze businesses. Perhaps a slight S-curve could be used to eliminate or reduce that situation.

My question: How can you maintain use of the existing bridge while building in its footpath? Does this scenario have a reality? If a single set of pilings supporting the bridge with layers of traffic (one direction of traffic over/under another) were used, would that facilitate construction on the existing path?

If so, it appears to be the choice with the least cost in right of way purchases. From available information at this time, I believe it to be the choice in the best interest of the public. (Bennett, 03-16-2012)

Comment:
There should be no local funding on a bridge used for interstate commerce. This should all come from federal sources since it is used by everyone in the country. (Tilley, 04-05-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your interest in the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement project. Your comments are both welcome and important to the Florida Department of Transportation.

Comment:
I’d like to see the new bridge bypass Gulf Breeze altogether. If the new bridge terminated in the Naval Live Oaks area on Hwy 98, it would cut down on all traffic going through Gulf Breeze unless they actually wanted to go there. It would benefit both drivers (speeding the commute) and the residents of Gulf Breeze (making it a picturesque destination). Six lanes, with breakdown lanes is a must. (Peters, 06-25-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
I really like the progress and the corridor locations for the bridge. Please consider a design that makes the 17th ave exit ramp on the North side a one way beyond the railroad tracks. 14th ave can be one way south of the railroad tracks. There would be an overpass or underpass (depending upon grades) from Bayfront to 17th going north thus eliminating a costly overpass on 17th going south to adjoin the south lane on the bridge. There would be no traffic light at 17th. When will the conceptual toll booths design become a part of the design phase? Is it not perceived by US DOT that tolling is a likely funding source for the bridge? I look forward to discussing these issues. (Pate, 10-09-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record. We look forward to seeing you at the Meeting next Thursday.
**Comment:**

Please accept my public comments as a concerned citizen that Pensacola and the region is on the verge of redeveloping its image as a vibrant place for business, residences, and tourists. Pensacola’s mayor has spent an entire campaign rebranding the city including logos, colors, adding energy efficient natural gas fleet, and promoting downtown as a 24 hour work/live environment.

I believe this bridge replacement is our one chance to add an iconic image to the skyline and further this vision of a region moving forward. I would request that a tolled reversible lanes option be added to the PD&E study to allow for some income to be used to enhance the bridge and I believe it provides GREATER EVACUATION POTENTIAL AND PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT. A 4 lane bridge with 2 reversible toll lanes provides flexibility for large holiday traffic events on the beach and additional lanes leaving the beach in the case of a hurricane. This proposal also provides a cost return to the taxpayers or concessionaire.

This type of program is being used on a larger scale in Fort Lauderdale- I-595 reversible lane PPP project, I-75 in Miami- Dade reversible lane study and was such a successful test project on I-95 Express Lanes in Miami-Dade, the project is now being expanded to Fort Lauderdale. This is a hybrid approach that allows for driver choice and guaranteed time benefits in exchange for a toll. ALL EXISTING CAPACITY REMAINS FREE.

Please add a reversible toll option to the PD&E study and consider expanding the aesthetics by using a design-build or Public Private Project concessionaire approach.

Thank you for your consideration,
This is the most important infrastructure project for Pensacola-Gulf Breeze in the next 25 years!!!

We must make a statement and get this one correct. Our residents deserve just as good as Tampa Skyway, Miami planned I-395, even our rival Mobile, Alabama has a beautiful suspension bridge. *(Adams, 10-10-2012)*

**Response:**

Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

**Comment:**

I am concerned in the information being discriminated regarding the replacement of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. Clearly there is a decision already preferred and residents and business leaders are being led on to believe this is the only option TOLL or 6 LANE PLAIN BRIDGE with over 20’ retaining walls blocking all views of the bay from Wayside Park and the Welcome Center.

The alternatives analysis was ridiculous. Do you really think Gulf Breeze wants all those tourists to bypass their city? Do you think Pensacola Beach wants all those tourists to go to Avalon Blvd?
This is unacceptable and unprofessional.

The Gulf Breeze side of the Bay Bridge has an elevated approach that allows parking under the bridge, as well as, boat parking and an organized boat launching facility with proper boat parking spaces. This not only allows views under the bridge, but rectifies the coordination of park parking for autos and trucks with boat trailers. PENSACOLA DESERVES EQUAL TREATMENT!

The next item I would like to bring to your attention is that the survey on the website clearly weighs people’s decisions away from a Toll Option. Leading Questions like would you rather have your property taxes raised, pay a toll, pay higher state taxes to finance the bridge is misleading. There are NUMEROUS FUNDING MECHANISMS. No one will ever say raise my taxes, toll my roads, and I love it! This could be financed using a Public Private Partnership Model, Design Build Model, CRA or county tourism taxes of both counties can be used, a partial toll facility commonly referred to as Express Lanes, there could be city, county support, and making a survey black and white leaning resident’s decisions is misleading.

Please understand that this is the GATEWAY TO PENSACOLA AND GULF BREEZE! This is not a typical bridge. This is where I grew up fishing on the old bridge. This is where all tourists head from I-110 to the Beach. This is an important bridge for the cities, region and State of Florida.

Please broaden the scope of your study within the existing corridor with multiple funding options and bridge design alternatives. Ask residents would you pay to build the Sunshine Skyway that greets people to St Petersburg? What type of lighting, colors, design of columns (see I-110 has a leaf pattern and I-10 has the Blue Angels). There are building types that allow for arched wider spacing of columns using precast modular girders hoisted into place.

There are a lot more options for construction, financing, aesthetics, connectivity to parks, etc. than are being shown or studied at this time. Please broaden your study and give residents true options for the most important bridge in North Florida.

(Baxter, 10-11-2012)

Response: Comment documented for the public record.

Comment: For public record please. I have great concerns that the new project will not include the ability for residents to safely turn into the bay bridge villas if traveling from the south on hwy 98. Currently it is very dangerous at best to turn into the villas. If the road is widened then there will be no ability to turn in unless you are turning from an active traffic lane. (Brown, 11-18-2012)

Response: Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.
Comment:
Please find a digital copy of the rendering that was discussed during our meeting. We enjoyed meeting with you and the opportunity to share and explore critical concerns about this valuable project for our community. Thank you for your immediate and utmost attention to our conversation. We look forward to hearing back from you at your earliest opportunity. (Lee, 11-28-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
I just heard about this toll bridge today, I could not believe it, so I checked out this site once I got home and situated. I have been living here since June 2012 and ALWAYS avoid the other toll bridge because I refuse to pay to come home or go to a sister city, this is just ridiculous and now to redo and put a toll on this bridge feels to me like the residents are being “locked inside” almost and that’s a scary thought, so in JESUS NAME I PRAY that this situation is given another solution besides a toll bridge because the people who come to Gulf Breeze to go to the beach, or visit friends or go shopping shouldn’t have to scrape up money just to do so and the residents of Gulf Breeze deserve to have a way in and out without having to put money aside. Thanks for reading my comment.

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Nick--Thank you for coming to Pensacola this week to discuss all our thoughts and concepts regarding the bridge. Based on your thoughts of making 17th one way south, I did review the idea. The main concern with this option is that it completely removes the ability to evacuate the waterfront on the east side of town without the help from CSX to get under the RR at 14th. Also, getting from the higher grade at Gregory and 14th down under the tracks on 14th is more difficult. Likely not impossible though. Also, we may need to buy the liquor store on the NE corner of Gregory and 14th for merge lanes heading north on 14th and down under the tracks. Again, difficult but not impossible. I do like 17th one-way north better for the evacuation/emergency purposes. Thanks again, I look forward to staying in touch with you on this project. Please let me know if we can do anything to help. (Dana, 11-29-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
Thank you for visiting Pensacola this week to meet with Mayor Hayward and his representatives to discuss the Pensacola Bay Bridge project development. It was a pleasure discussing ideas and concepts about the bridge and its impact on the Pensacola area.
Mayor Hayward knows this project is perhaps the largest project in Pensacola’s history and certainly in our lifetime. He has asked me to volunteer my time and my resources to assist in this endeavor. We are passionate about making this bridge an aesthetically striking and iconic feature of our waterfront. In addition, we design to plan its landing in such a way that allows the city the opportunity to improve the areas vehicular circulation and to enhance the adjacent bay walk and parkland amenities. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you and your team as we move forward together on this important project.

(Pate, 12-03-2012)

Response:
Comment documented for the public record.

Comment:
Would you or a member of your team be able to provide some details on what the increased $600 M budget affords our community in the way of our requested amenities for the project? Remember we were talking about several design enhancements in the way of aesthetics, lighting, a mid span feature, and some landscape amenities added to the approach on the Pensacola side. (Gray, 02-01-2013)

Response:
We will be considering some lower cost aesthetic enhancements to the bridge and landscaping features to the parks as we develop our Design/Build RFP later in the project. It will be very similar to the renderings we have developed and presented at our last public meeting (and also available online at www.pensacolabaybridge.com). Of course, being that it is a D/B project each team’s concept will likely slightly differ.

Comment:
I would like to say that these renderings and conceptual drawings are great, but, has there been any consideration in leaving the existing bridge as a fishing bridge or replacing the Gulf Breeze side of the old fishing bridge. For decades, this fishing bridge has been a community mainstay that has provided wholesome recreation for many families. Please consider this request. (Avery, 02-07-2013)

Response:
Thanks for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Hi! I love the idea of this new project! I was wondering if there are plans to add a bike/ running walkway lane all to itself? Pensacola is a very active community and having our own lane would eliminate injuries and slow traffic! Share the road! Runners and Bikers alike! Thank you for your time! (McManus, 02-24-2013)
Response:
Thanks for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I would like to make a comment about the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement. The “Project Green Shores” site is adjacent to the bridge on one side, while the fishing pier is on the other side.

What are the plans to mitigate the effects on this living shoreline entitled “Project Green Shores?” This shoreline was constructed by the FL DEP. It provides habitat for many coastal species and serves as a sponge sucking up the pollutants flowing into the water from runoff of the surrounding populated areas.

I would love to hear back about this issue and I appreciate the ability to comment. (Straub, 04-17-2013)

Response:
Thank you for your comments concerning “Project Green Shores” and the Pensacola Bay Bridge Replacement project. I have forwarded your comments onto Mr. Brandon Bruner the FDOT project manager for this PD&E Study. Our office will get back to you with in the next couple of days in response to your email.

Comment:
If it weren’t for the exurbanite toll being charged for the Garcon Point Bridge, residents would have been more accepting. But absent that fact, recommend charging a higher “tourism/hotel” tax to fund a new bridge. (Poole, 10-30-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Build it, please. Use a $1.00 toll each way, no more, and put an expiration date on the toll. Make up the difference between available funds and the cost of construction, then sunset the toll a year or two after the project is paid for, or lower the toll to $0.25 and use the funds to pay for operations and maintenance. (Emmons, 10-30-2013)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I think if you toll this bridge it will just separate the communities. People like me will just go elsewhere to do our shopping spend our money. We already have a $3.75 toll on Garcon Point Bridge. If a toll is the only option at least offer a yearly pass so people can save some money that would have to use It. (Benites, 10-26-2012)
Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
Please consider saving the old bridge, south and north ends. Look at the sunshine sky way fishing bridge as an example and see how much tourism it brings. We are losing water access due to development and with rising fuel prices a fishing bridge would be huge benefit to the city. It would put Pensacola on the map for a major fishing destination! (Liao, 10-23-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
I would like clarification on what gas taxes are used for. I was under the impression that gas taxes were used for road maintenance and upgrades and think that the cost of a new bridge should be funded from these taxes. It seems that whenever a project is considered the first thing government thinks of is how can it additionally tax the individual instead of how can we cut administrative expenses and use more tax dollars towards public projects. And if toll is collected will it be permanently? i.e. Bob Sikes bridge to the Beach, that was not originally to be a permanent toll, yet, we are still charged a toll after I am sure the bridge has been paid for. Navarre Beach no longer charges a toll. That is my concern regarding charging a toll for a new Bay Bridge, it will be charged forever, way after the bridge has been paid for. (King, 10-22-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.

Comment:
When the I-10 Escambia Bay bridge was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan, FDOT listed deploying the concrete demolition materials to create artificial reefs as the preferred disposal option. This was accomplished, and the benefits to marine life, recreation and local & state economies will be reaped for decades. As the replacement of the Pensacola Bay bridge is planned, artificial reefing should be an integral part of the project. Public funds utilized for the project will be best utilized in this proven mechanism for economic and ecological returns on investment. Escambia County maintains permitted artificial reef sites and reef deployment management to repeat the successes of the I-10 reefing project. Please contact Escambia County Marine Resources Division manager Robert Turpin at 850-554-5869. (Turpin, 10-21-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record.
Comment:
I believe form follows function. So, I don’t believe money should be spent on decorative embellishment to the new Pensacola Bay bridge. (Ludlow, 10-22-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record

Comment:
Whatever the design, we must have bike lanes. Preferably protected bike lanes with a small barrier. There is no reason more people should not be biking from Downtown to Pensacola Beach. It is only 9 miles away. (Schuck, 10-17-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your comments. They will certainly be considered and will become part of the public record

Comment:
Can you please tell me if the Public Alternatives Meeting scheduled for Oct. 18 will announce the study results for the best alternative for the alignment of the new Pensacola Bay Bridge? (Larkin, 10-9-2012)

Response:
Thank you for your question regarding the Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study. The Design Alternatives Meeting on October 18, 2012 will give you an opportunity to view and comment on the Alternatives being considered. To ensure you maximize your time at the meeting, please visit our website (www.pensacolabaybridge.com) a couple days before the meeting and you can view the information that will be presented. A Preferred Alternative will be decided on after all of the Public comments are considered.

Comment:
Members of the Baybridge Condo community were told that a corridor decision would be announced by early summer. Could you please tell us when we can expect to hear something and if there is a reason for the delay? (Larkin, 9-21-2012)

Response:
We are planning a Public Meeting for October 18th at the Pensacola Civic Center. The Corridor decision will be presented at that time. Advertisements in the local newspaper and letters to your condominium will be provided in the coming weeks. We will also have additional information available on our website at www.pensacolabaybridge.com shortly.

Comment:
I am curious to know what stage this project is currently at, and if this project is moving forward in yr 2013? (Knight, 1-15-2013)
Response:
Thank you for your comments. The Pensacola Bay Bridge PD&E Study is moving forward. The FDOT is planning to have a decision on the location of the replacement bridge in late spring or summer 2013. You can stay informed on the latest issues regarding the bridge replacement at www.pensacolabaybridge.com.
7.2 Results of Project Website Survey Regarding Tolls

The project website included an unscientific survey of the public’s opinion regarding the payment of tolls on a new Pensacola Bay Bridge. Exhibit 7.2.1 displays the results. As of April 16, 2012, 2,745 individuals had taken the online survey.

Exhibit 7.2.1: Pensacola Bay Bridge Toll Survey Results

Results are represented as both a percentage and numerically.

If the Department were to place a toll on the replacement bridge, what toll amount would force you to minimize/eliminate trips across the bridge? (Select one)

- $0.25/trip: 39%
- $0.50/trip: 15%
- $1.00/trip: 12%
- $2.00/trip: 14%
- $3.00/trip: 5%

If local funding is required to help construct the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement, which of the following options would you prefer to generate the required local funding?

- Increased local sales tax: 70%
- Increased local property tax: 14%
- Tolling the Bridge: 16%
Which of the following most closely represents your opinion regarding tolling all lanes on the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement?

- Strongly Oppose: 83%
- Oppose: 7%
- Neutral: 3%
- Support: 3%
- Strongly Support: 4%

Which of the following most closely represents your opinion regarding tolling to provide additional funding to cover the increased cost of a bridge with signature appeal. Signature features could include enhanced lighting, bridge décor, or other architecture?

- Strongly Oppose: 75%
- Oppose: 10%
- Neutral: 8%
- Support: 4%
- Strongly Support: 3%
Which of the following most closely represents your opinion regarding tolling all lanes on the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement?

![Survey Chart]

If local funding is required to help construct the Pensacola Bay Bridge replacement, which of the following options would you prefer to generate the required local funding?

![Survey Chart]
Which of the following most closely represents your opinion regarding tolling to provide additional funding to cover the increased cost of a bridge with signature appeal. Signature features could include enhanced lighting, bridge décor, or other architecture.

If the Department were to place a toll on the replacement bridge, what toll amount would force you to minimize/eliminate trips across the bridge? (Select one)
8.0 Public Hearing

FDOT will not make a final decision on the proposed action or any alternative until a public hearing has been held on this project and all comments received have been taken into consideration.

The final environmental document will contain a description of comments and the FDOT responses in this section. The Public Hearing Transcript will be included in Section 8.1.

8.1 Public Hearing Transcript

To be included in final EA.