Florida Department of Transportation - District One

Anna Maria Island Bridge

Project Development and Environment Study

Newsletter No. 3 www.annamariaislandbridge.com December 2008

PUBLIC INFORMATION WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has scheduled a public information workshop during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study being conducted to determine the future of the Anna Maria Island Bridge on State Road (S.R.) 64 in Manatee County, Florida. The workshop will be held **Tuesday, December 16, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Saint Bernard Catholic Church activity center, 248 South Harbor Drive, Holmes Beach.**

The meeting will be held in an informal, open house format. Persons may attend at any time to review project concepts and displays and to hold one-on-one conversations with project team members. An audiovisual presentation will be shown continuously to explain the various alternatives. Information stations will be located in the church activity center with scribes who will document comments and questions from attendees. Comment forms and study surveys will be available that can be completed at the workshop or taken home, completed and mailed to FDOT by Wednesday, December 31, 2008.

Persons with disabilities who may need special accommodations at the workshop under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Mr. Chris Piazza, P.E., at (863) 519-2293 or chris.piazza@dot.state.fl.us at least seven days before the workshop. If you have any questions about the study or would like more information prior to the workshop, please feel free to contact Mr. Piazza.

BRIDGE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS ONGOING

In January 2008, FDOT began a PD&E Study of the Anna Maria Island Bridge on S.R. 64 (Manatee Avenue), a designated hurricane evacuation route. The study is addressing S.R. 64 from west of S.R. 789 (Gulf Drive) to east of Perico Bay Boulevard, a distance of about 2 miles. (Please see the location map below.) The engineering and environment study is analyzing a no-build alternative, further rehabilitation options and replacement alternatives. The study will conclude with a determination of whether the bridge will be replaced and, if so, the type of structure that will be built.

NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The no-build alternative will remain under consideration throughout the alternatives analysis and evaluation process. The no-build alternative includes routine maintenance of the existing bridge to keep it in operable condition.

REHABILITATION ALTERNATIVE

The rehabilitation alternative will also be considered throughout the remainder of the study. The rehabilitation alternative includes performing major repairs to the fixed and moveable portions of the bridge. The rehabilitation alternative would extend the service life of the bridge by approximately 25 years following completion of the current rehabilitation project.

BUILD ALTERNATIVES

The possibility of a new corridor other than S.R. 64 was studied. It was determined that a new corridor would result in significant social and environmental impacts and would not address the problem of the deteriorating S.R. 64 bridge. Therefore, developing a new corridor or improving a parallel roadway is not an option for this project. Rehabilitation or replacement of the current bridge within the existing corridor provides the most feasible alternative.

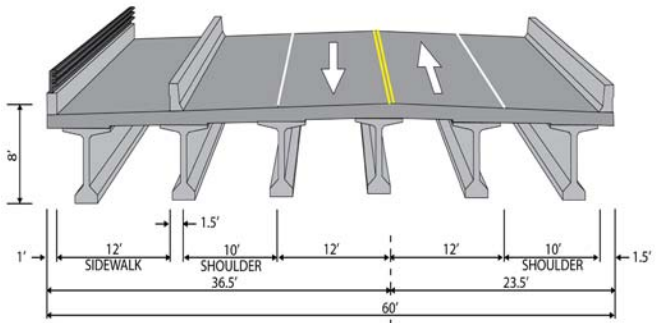
The evaluation of all alternatives included a center alignment, a north alignment, and a south alignment. The project length is not significantly different for the center, north or south alignments; therefore, construction costs would not be significantly different between the north and south alignments. Since the center alignment requires a long detour or an expensive temporary bridge, it was dropped from further consideration. The north alignment is 10 feet north of the existing bridge and the south alignment is 14 feet south of the existing bridge.

Two bridge typical cross sections are being considered for the bridge replacement alternatives in this study. (Please see the typical section drawings.) Only two-lane alternatives are being studied because S.R. 64, within the study limits, has been classified as a constrained roadway by the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization. Both typical sections include two 12-foot lanes and two 10-foot shoulders, which can accommodate bicyclists and disabled vehicles. The design speed is 45 miles per hour.

The difference in the two proposals is the sidewalks. Typical section “A” includes only one 12-foot sidewalk, along the north side of the bridge, separated from the shoulder by a concrete barrier wall. A 4.5-foot high railing will be provided on the outside of the 12-foot sidewalk.

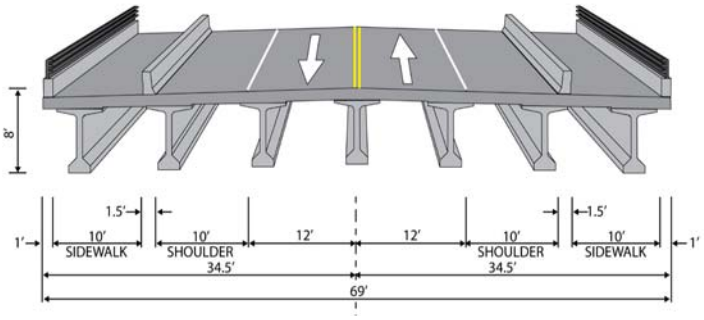
TYPICAL SECTION “A”

PROPOSED TWO-LANE UNDIVIDED BRIDGE
WITH ONE 12’ SIDEWALK
DESIGN SPEED 45 MPH



TYPICAL SECTION “B”

PROPOSED TWO-LANE UNDIVIDED BRIDGE
WITH TWO 10’ SIDEWALKS
DESIGN SPEED 45 MPH



Typical section “B” includes a 10-foot sidewalk on both sides of the bridge.

Finally, low-level and mid-level drawbridges and a high-level fixed span bridge are being studied. A tunnel alternative was also analyzed. U.S. Coast Guard guide clearances have been established for the Intracoastal Waterway at this location. They are a 21-foot vertical navigational clearance for a new drawbridge and a 65-foot vertical navigational clearance for a new fixed bridge. The horizontal guide clearance for all bridge replacements is 100 feet perpendicular between fenders, which is a 10-foot increase over the existing condition.

FDOT has developed the following conceptual bridge designs:

- A low-level drawbridge, similar to the existing bridge, would have a 21.5-foot vertical clearance when the bridge is closed.
- A mid-level drawbridge would have a 45-foot vertical clearance when the bridge is closed. The higher clearance would allow about 38% of the boats that currently require the bridge to open to pass underneath without requiring the bridge to open, reducing delays for vehicles and vessels.

- A high-level fixed structure with a 65-foot vertical clearance would allow over 99 percent of all the vessels that currently use the channel to pass under the bridge, eliminating the delay to vehicles and vessels.

All bridge replacement alternatives include the removal of the existing bridge once traffic has been shifted to the new bridge. There are currently no plans to leave any portions of the existing bridge intact for recreational use.

VIABLE REPLACEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The combination of two alignments, two typical cross sections and three bridge replacement heights results in various bridge replacement alternatives. In order to quantify the costs and potential impacts associated with the alternatives, FDOT is analyzing the no-build alternative, the rehabilitation alternative, as well as both alignments, the widest typical cross section (Typical Section "B") and the three bridge heights. The results will be included in an Alternatives Analysis Matrix that will be presented at the public information workshop.

Aerial photographs with the alternatives will be displayed at the workshop for your review. In addition, computer renderings of the three bridge replacement heights will be displayed.

TUNNEL ALTERNATIVE

FDOT analyzed a tunnel alternative. An estimated construction cost for a 6,000-foot long tunnel ranges from $370 million to $535 million, not including additional costs for design, right-of-way, construction engineering inspection (CEI), operations and maintenance. Based on the estimate, the tunnel alternative cost far exceeds the cost of any of the bridge replacement or rehabilitation alternatives.

Environmental impacts resulting from the tunnel alternative were evaluated. Possible impacts to the natural environment caused by dredging and the high cost of a tunnel resulted in the alternative being eliminated from further consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Analysis of the social, cultural, natural and physical environments that surround the bridge is an important component of the study. Environmental impacts being studied include wetlands, floodplains, threatened and endangered species, water quality, hazardous materials, recreational sites, historic structures and archaeological sites.

No significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed alternatives. Impacts will be included in an Alternatives Analysis Matrix that will be presented at the public information workshop.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

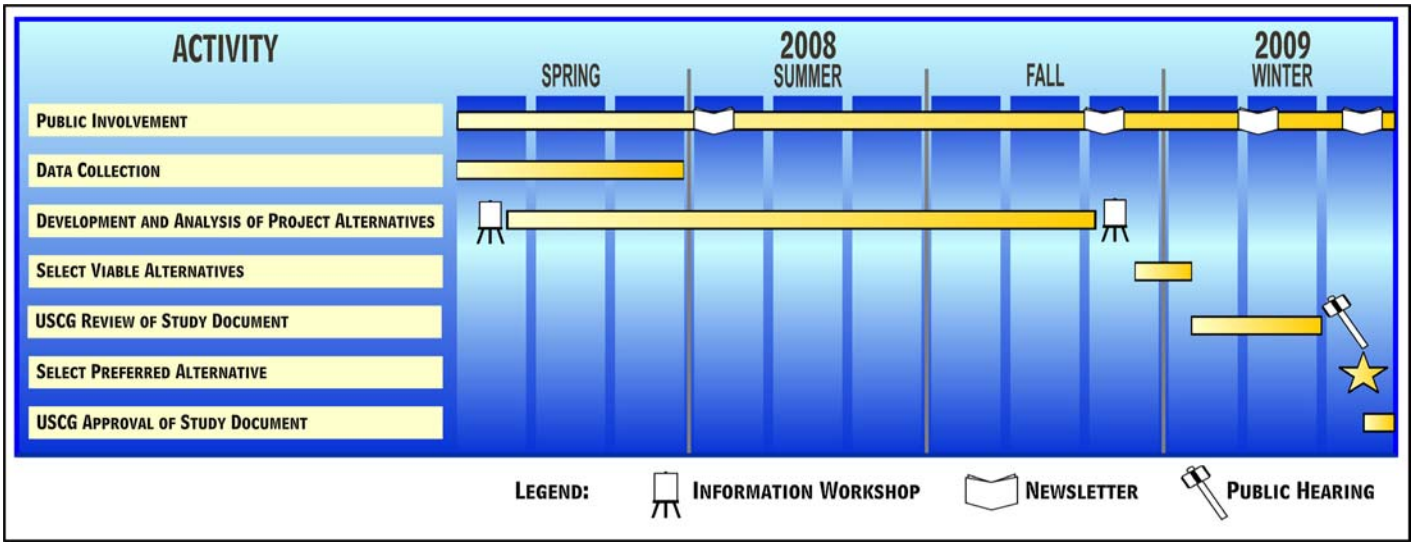
FDOT will review comments received from the public information workshop and, together with the engineering and environmental analyses, refine the viable build alternatives. A thorough analysis of potential environmental impacts will be conducted. Findings will be documented in several reports. The no-build alternative, the rehabilitation alternative and the viable build alternatives will be presented at a formal public hearing when public comments are solicited. The hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 2009.

Following the hearing, a final determination will be made. The determination will be submitted for approval to the United States Coast Guard, the lead federal agency for the study. Following approval, the project would then be eligible to advance to the design, right-of-way acquisition and construction phases as they are programmed.

WORK PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The design, right-of-way and construction phases for the replacement or rehabilitation of the Anna Maria Island Bridge are not programmed in the current FDOT Tentative Five Year Work Program for fiscal years 2009/10 - 2013/14.

PD&E STUDY SCHEDULE



STAY INFORMED

We urge you to participate in this study and invite your comments and questions. If you received this newsletter in the mail, you are included in the PD&E Study mailing list. If you would like to add a name and/or an address, please contact: Mr. Chris Piazza, P.E., FDOT, District Environmental Management Office, P.O. Box 1249, Bartow, Florida 33831, (863) 519-2293, 1-800-292-FDOT, or E-mail: chris.piazza@dot.state.fl.us

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