

MEETING MINUTES

**Cultural Resource Committee (CRC) Meeting No. 4
May 20, 2020
Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study
Venetian Causeway
from North Bayshore Drive to Purdy Avenue in Miami-Dade County
Financial Project Number: 422713-2-22-01
ETDM Number: 12756**

ATTENDEES

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six

- Michael McDaniel
- Roy Jackson
- Pablo Orozco, P.E.
- Matthew Marino, M.A., RPA
- Irene Varela, E.I.
- Rudy Garcia, P.E.
- Daniel Iglesias, P.E.
- Barbara Culhane, M.S.

Miami-Dade County

- Gabriel Delgado, P.E.
- Lin Li
- Ryan Fisher, P.E.
- Yanek Fernandez
- James Martincak

City of Miami

- Collin Worth
- Warren Adams

City of Miami Beach

- Jose Gonzalez, P.E.
- Deborah Tackett
- Lisel Suarez-Toledo
- Nelson Perez-Jacome, P.E.

United States Coast Guard

- Randall Overton

Florida Department of State (SHPO)

- Alyssa McManus

Florida Department of Historical Resources

- Adrienne Daggett

Consultant Project Team

- Please see attached sign-in sheets.

MEETING LOCATION

- Go-To-Meeting (Virtual Meeting)

MEETING SUMMARY

- Virtual meeting began at 2:01 p.m.

- Ms. Barbara Culhane started the meeting on behalf of the FDOT and explained that Dat Huynh the FDOT PM was not able to attend the meeting. She informed the attendees that the meeting would be recorded and posted on the project website for everyone's information and introduced Mr. Rick Crooks, P.E. the Consultant Project Manager.
- Mr. Rick Crooks, P.E. began with introductions and verified attendance at the meeting.
- Ms. Tasha Cunningham followed the introductions by presenting Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Cooperating Agencies
 - Mr. Crooks indicated that the Venetian Causeway PD&E Study is being conducted in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Miami-Dade County (MDC), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCE) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG).
- Purpose and Need for Project
 - Mr. Crooks explained that the "Purpose and Need for Project" slide is included in all the project's presentations, which is to address identified structural and functional deficiencies of the twelve existing bridges (ten low-level fixed spans and two movable bascules), through potential alternatives such as No-Build, Replacement or Rehabilitation.
- Mr. Crooks reviewed the agenda that will be presented during the CRC No. 4 meeting:
 - Project Status
 - Purpose of CRC
 - Preferred Alternative
 - Historic Resources
 - Discussion of Mitigation
 - Section 106 Process
 - Next Steps
- Project Status
 - Mr. Crooks explained the Class of Action (COA) Determination of the Environmental Assessment (EA) was approved on November 10, 2016 by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the NEPA Assignment, which went into effect on December 14, 2016, states the Florida Department of Transportation assumed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) responsibility with approval authority through the Office of Environmental Management (OEM).
- Purpose of the Cultural Resource Committee (CRC)
 - Mr. Crooks began by describing the aerial shot of the Venetian Causeway in the slide that highlights the Area of Potential Effect (APE) through the Cultural Resource Assessment survey.
 - Mr. Crooks turned the presentation over to Amy Streelman.
 - Ms. Streelman introduced herself and continued the presentation.
 - Ms. Streelman stated that the focus of the project is the Venetian Causeway, which is a significant historic resource that was constructed in 1926, the oldest causeway in Florida and listed on the local and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
 - She continued the presentation by mentioning that the project team identified two additional significant resources that was identified within APE, the Collins Canal, and the Terrace Tower. She also indicated that Collins Canal and Terrace Tower were determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
 - Ms. Streelman turned the presentation over to Stephanie Romero, P.E.
- Preferred Alternative
 - Ms. Romero stated the Preferred Alternative was identified as the Replacement Alternative. This alternative proposes a bridge typical

- section that is 16 ft. wider than the existing. She continued by stating that the proposed replacement bridges will mimic the existing bridges by maintaining the low-profile bridges, the arched beams, the geometric designed railings, the lighting fixtures, and light poles.
- Ms. Romero presented the Preferred Alternative for the Movable Bridge. Ms. Romero mentioned that the proposed bascule bridge will raise the existing 6ft. vertical clearance to 12.2ft., with retaining walls at the approaches.
 - Ms. Romero continued the presentation with the Preferred Alternative – Bridge Typical Section. She stated that the proposed section is addressing the sub-standard sidewalks and bike lanes, proposing 8ft. sidewalks, 7ft. bike lanes while reducing travel lanes to 11ft. lanes.
 - Ms. Romero presented the Preferred Alternative – Raised Bridge Typical Section. To address possible sea level rise by raising the bridges 1ft. minimum.
 - Ms. Romero turned the presentation over to Ms. Streelman.
 - Section 106 Process
 - Ms. Streelman presented the Section 106 Process that is currently in the final stages.
 - Historic Resources
 - Ms. Streelman continued by presenting a summary of the Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS).
 - Ms. Streelman stated that following the CRAS, they prepared the Effects Determination Case Study Report, where they applied the effects criteria and the improvements that were proposed to the significant resources.
 - Ms. Streelman stated that during the No Action TSM&O Alternatives, they did not find any adverse effects to any of the resources.
 - Ms. Streelman stated that they looked at the Rehabilitation Alternatives during the effects study and mentioned that there would be impacts to the Venetian Causeway and the resource group but there would not be any effects to Collins Canal and Terrace Towers.
 - Ms. Streelman also mentioned that the preferred alternative will also have adverse effects to the Venetian Causeway resource group but not to the Collins Canal and Terrace Towers.
 - Ms. Romero followed Ms. Streelman by presenting the Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation slide. Ms. Romero stated that they identified that the Replacement Alternative will have an adverse effect on significant historic resources – due to removal of the original bridges.
 - Ms. Romero stated that the proposed action will be required demolition and complete replacement of the existing historic Venetian Causeway bridges 2 through 12. The historic elements of the causeway include:
 - The octagonal concrete entrance towers (will remain)
 - The low profile of the bridge
 - The concrete arched beams
 - The geometrically designed bridge railings
 - The lighting poles and fixtures
 - The historically designed East Bridge Tender House
 - Ms. Romero stated that as a conclusion, they identified that the Replacement Alternative meets the Section 4(f) prudent and feasible standard. She also discussed the need to implement measures to minimize harm.
 - Ms. Romero turned the presentation over to Ms. Streelman.

- Discussion of Mitigation
 - Ms. Streelman continued by presenting the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) process.
 - Ms. Streelman discussed the consultation with agencies and mitigation measures.
 - Ms. Streelman continued the presentation by explaining the potential mitigation measures.
- Section 106 Process
 - Ms. Streelman continued the presentation with a brief description of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the completed steps, and the next steps throughout the course of the study.
- Next Steps
 - Mr. Crooks continued the presentation with a timeline of the next steps for the PD&E study of the project.
 - Mr. Crooks stated that this would be the last meeting the project will have with the Cultural Resource Committee (CRC) and the next step will be the preparation of the MOA, distributing it for review and comments, and hosting the Public Hearing, which is tentative for late 2020, early 2021.
- Mr. Crooks presented a slide with Vehicle Safety Tips.
- Mr. Crooks presented a slide with the project website and contact information.
- Mr. Crooks began sharing Venetian Causeway PD&E project boards.
- Ms. Crooks concluded the presentation and opened the meeting up for questions.
- Michael Fryd, a stakeholder, and resident of the Venetian Islands expressed a concern.
- Mr. Fryd stated that it looks as if bridges 9, 10 & 11 will be combined into one single, massive replacement bridge.
- Mr. Fryd also asked if there are any breaks in the railings for bridges 9, 10 and 11.
- Mr. Crooks responded that there probably will not be a break in railings for bridges 9, 10 and 11 because there is a retaining wall on the spoil island. He elaborated by saying that they are aiming to maintain a connection to the spoil island so people can still access the spoil island from the roadway.
- Mr. Fryd expressed that the proposed East Bascule Bridge will have a significantly higher elevation. This will dramatically alter the low profile character of that bridge. We will lose the sweeping views from the swale islands as they will now have railings. The current swale islands are a pleasant and safe public amenity. The new design makes the swale areas difficult to access, hides them from view, and makes them ideal locations for homeless people to live. This is not an improvement and loses a significant aspect of our historic causeway.
- Mr. Crooks stated the machinery platform on the bascule bridge was raised above the flood elevation, and in the process, it raised the bridges to the current height.
- Mr. Fryd responded that he remembers having this discussion during the Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting and it was mentioned that the purpose of this was that after a hurricane, the bridges would still remain operational and the residents do not need the bridges to operate and would prefer to lock them down.
- Mr. Crooks replied by stating that the bridges would need to be operational for boat passage.
- Alyssa McManus (SHPO) expressed that it looks like the mitigation is going in a very positive direction and they are looking forward to furthering consultation on the final draft of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- Mr. Nelson Perez-Jacome (City of Miami Beach) mentioned that Miami-Dade County informed him that the Venetian Bridges would be replaced between 3 to 7 years from now and asked that Mr. Crooks corroborate on the project schedule.

- Mr. Crooks confirmed that timeline and explained that the PD&E process must be concluded, and the preferred alternative is the replacement alternative. He continued by stating that they have completed the draft Section 4(f) and are currently working through the Section 106 process and the purpose of the CRC meeting is to achieve consultation with the agencies.
- Mr. Crooks mentioned that the next steps in the PD&E process is the public hearing, then Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) which would conclude the NEPA process. He continued by mentioning that the design concept is close to complete and once the PD&E phase is over, they will move quickly to the final design stage, a bidding process will occur and then a contractor will be selected.
- Mr. Crooks stated that according to the MOT concept, 4 years are assigned for the construction of the project, estimated according to the time it would take to construct each bridge location.
- Mr. Perez-Jacome requested that when the design phase begins, can the project team coordinate with the City of Miami Beach because they have two water mains hanging on the bridge and do not know if they can wait for it to be replaced. He continued by saying that the City of Miami Beach will be looking at an internal alternative if they cannot wait till the design phase of the project.
- Mr. Crooks responded by mentioning that there would be coordination during the final design phase.
- Mr. Fryd asked if they have the option on Bridge 10 of doing just a rehabilitation without doing a complete rebuild, like Bridge 1.
- Mr. Crooks stated that Bridge 1 was a replacement because it was determined that there was no option available for a rehabilitation, similar to Bridge 10.
- Mr. Fryd stated that there was not a significant change in aesthetics to Bridge 1.
- Mr. Crooks responded by saying that there was a significant change because Bridge 1 was raised to 16 ft., but the total length remains the same.
- Mr. Fryd agreed that Bridges 9, 10 and 11 is the same length from an engineering perspective but from an aesthetic perspective, instead of having three small bridges with two swale islands in between, visually it would look as one bridge.
- Mr. Fryd asked if something could be done to rehabilitate the bridge.
- Mr. Crooks stated that the issue is the foundation of the bridges and they conducted geotechnical investigations to check the length of the pile embedment. He continued by saying that in 1926, they didn't drive piles deep enough on the bridges and in the case of a hurricane, the bridges will get scour that would expose the foundations and could lose the bridges, which would trap residents on the islands. He stated that the replacement does change the aesthetic look of the bridges, but they put safety above all. He continued by mentioning that they have lowered the bridge as much as possible to create a connection between the island and the portion on the retaining wall.
- Mr. Fryd asked if the spoil islands would be made higher so there is no need for railing on the islands.
- Mr. Crooks responded that the Project Team consultants were at the bridges a few weeks ago taking pictures of every connection to the island, examining where they could raise and they can't make a commitment because of environmental issues that avoids encroachments to the waterway, however they are looking at it as an option.
- Mr. Fryd asked how deep the pilings were on Bridge 1.
- Mr. Crooks responded by saying that the pilings were replaced with drilled shafts.
- Ms. Deborah Tackett stated that once the project gets further in the design phase and the mitigation components that they focus on the original design of the bridge like the light posts and railings.
Ms. Amy Streelman agreed to take note of her comment.
- Mr. Roy Jackson stated that he appreciated the amount of work put into the various solutions for the project alternatives.

- Mr. Crooks concluded the meeting and thanked those who participated.
- Mr. Crooks stated that the meeting is concluded, however because the advertised end time was 4:00 p.m., he and the Project Team would stay on the line until 4:00 p.m. in case others join.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

The following minutes will be considered an accurate record of the meeting unless FDOT is notified in writing within ten (10) business days following the distribution date.

Minutes Prepared By: Myrick Mitchell

Myrick Mitchell
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Advocates, Inc.

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