



BIG CARLOS PASS BRIDGE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT STUDY PUBLIC HEARING JANUARY 28, 2021

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Completed in 1965, the Big Carlos Pass Bridge spans Big Carlos Pass, connecting the Town of Fort Myers Beach with the City of Bonita Springs. The need for the project is based on a number of deficiencies of the existing bridge resulting from age and long-term exposure to the aggressive saltwater environment. As one of only two bridges serving the chain of islands forming Estero Bay, the Big Carlos Pass Bridge is a critically important infrastructure asset that must be maintained, making this project a high priority for both the County and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The study focused on the bridge and roadway approaches from approximately Estrellita Drive south to the entrance of Lovers Key State Park, a distance of about 0.6 miles. The project team developed and evaluated several alternatives including the no-build rehabilitation alternative, a new low-level drawbridge and a high-level fixed bridge. On January 18, 2018, Lee County Department of Transportation (DOT) held an alternatives public meeting to present alternatives for rehabilitating or replacing the bridge.

On December 18, 2018, the Lee Board of County Commissioners approved the fixed span bridge on the Gulf side of the existing bridge as the preferred alternative. Lee County DOT presents the preferred alternative at this public hearing.

FIXED BRIDGE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



Rendering Viewed from Lovers Key Beach Club



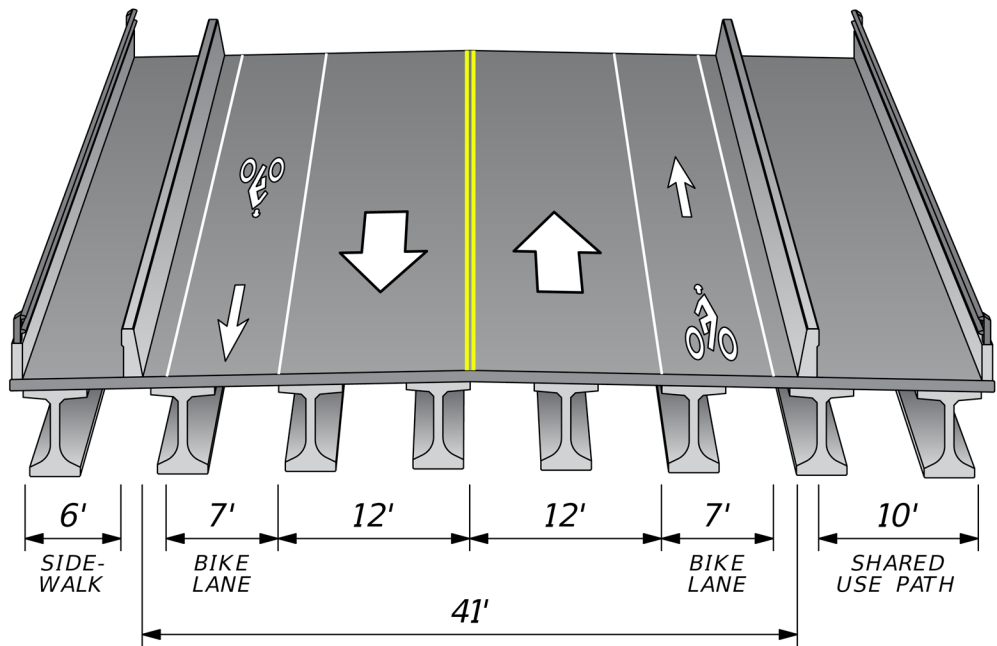
Rendering Viewed from Islands End III

Throughout this study, a “no-build rehabilitation” alternative is also considered and will remain a viable alternative until the completion of the study. The “no-build rehabilitation” alternative assumes that the existing bridge will be rehabilitated then require replacement in 20 years.



Rendering of No-Build Rehabilitation Alternative with Crutch Bents

PROPOSED FIXED BRIDGE TYPICAL SECTION



The bridge will include two 12-foot travel lanes, seven-foot bike lanes, a 10-foot shared use path on the west side and a six-foot sidewalk on the east side. The bridge would be constructed to the west, or Gulf side, of the existing bridge.

EVALUATION MATRIX

EVALUATION FACTORS	No-Build Alternative (Rehabilitation) ¹	Preferred Alternative
Vertical Navigation Clearance	24.5 ft	60 ft
Horizontal Navigation Clearance	50 ft	90 ft
Right-of-Way Impacts		
Parcels Impacted	0	0
Relocations (Business/Residential)	0/0	0/0
Right-of-Way Acquisition	0 ac	0 ac
Social, Natural, and Physical Resources		
Species/Habitat Potential Impacts	None	Medium
Potential Contamination Sites (Medium/High)	0/0	0/1
Wetland and Surface Water Impacts	0 ac	2.5 ac
Seagrass Impacts	0 ac	0 ac
Live Bottom Impacts	0 ac	0 ac
Archaeological and Historic Site Impacts	None	None
Traffic Noise Impacts	None	Low
Public Parks and Recreational Areas Impacts	None	Low
Aquatic Preserve Impacts	None	None
Utility Impacts		
Bonita Springs Utilities	None	Low
Century Link	None	Medium
Comcast	None	Low
Florida Power and Light	None	Medium
Lee County Utilities	None	Medium
Town of Ft. Myers Beach	None	Low
Estimated Project Costs (2017 Dollars) ²		
Design (10% of Construction Cost)	\$2,448,000	\$4,135,000
Right-of-Way	\$0	\$0
Roadway Construction	\$0	\$5,426,000
Bridge Construction	\$24,478,000	\$35,919,000
CEI (10% of Construction Cost)	\$2,448,000	\$4,135,000
Subtotal, Initial Capital Investment	\$29,374,000	\$49,615,000
Bridge Lifecycle Maintenance and Operations	\$10,846,000	\$38,157,000
Total Project Cost	\$40,220,000 ³	\$87,772,000
Life of Alternative	20 years	75 years

Notes:
(1) The No-Build Alternative bridge rehabilitation will extend the useful life of the bridge by approximately 20 years, after which replacement will be required.
(2) Costs are estimated for the life of the alternative using a 4% inflation rate.
(3) Cost for 20-year life of the No-Build Alternative. Total 75-year cost with bridge replacement at the end of the 20-year life of the No-Build Alternative is:
(a) \$183M if replaced with a High-Level Fixed Bridge, or
(b) \$276M if replaced with a Low-Level Drawbridge.

Evaluated Environmental and Socioeconomic Factors

Lee County DOT evaluated environmental and socioeconomic factors relating to the proposed widening improvements in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and other federal requirements.

- The evaluation considered the effects of replacing the bridge on:
- Threatened and endangered species
 - Wetlands and floodplains
 - Stormwater management and permitting
 - Noise
 - Right-of-way requirements and relocations
 - Contamination
 - Cultural and historic resources
 - Land use
 - Air quality
 - Construction effects
 - Aesthetics

Results of the environmental contamination screening showed that the Preferred Alternative will result in no significant impacts.

This project is not expected to change future land use patterns on nor result in adverse impacts to water quality and air quality. Minimal construction effects are expected.

Environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with the proposed bridge replacement have been summarized in an evaluation matrix shown here and on display at this public hearing.

WHAT'S NEXT

After the public hearing, final documentation will be submitted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for approval. Upon FDOT acceptance, the project will advance to the design and construction phases as funding allows. The study must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) in order to qualify for state and federal funding assistance.

PROJECT DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

Project information and graphics showing the proposed improvements will be available for public viewing at two locations until February 18, 2021. One location is the Fort Myers Beach Public Library at 2755 Estero Blvd, Fort Myers Beach, Florida 33931. The library is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday; closed on Sunday. The other location is the Lee County DOT office at 1500 Monroe Street, third floor, Fort Myers, Florida 33901.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

Written statements and exhibits will be accepted and recorded as part of this hearing if postmarked by February 11, 2021.

We urge you to participate in this study and invite your comments and questions.

Please submit your comments to:

Tom Marquardt, Public Works Programs Manager
Lee County Department of Transportation
1500 Monroe Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901
Telephone: 239-533-8530
TMarquardt@leegov.com

Please visit the project website to learn more about this important bridge study:

www.BigCarlosBridgeProject.com

This public hearing was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements, Section 335.199, F.S. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.