Record of Decision

Crosstown Parkway Extension
Final Environmental Impact Statement
(EIS-2011-02-59-F)

State Road Number:      N/A
Financial Project Number: 410844-1-28-01
Federal Project Number:  7777-087-A
County:                   St. Lucie County
Description:             Crosstown Parkway from Manth Lane to U.S. 1
                          New Bridge Crossing of the North Fork St. Lucie River
Introduction

This is the Record of Decision (ROD) and Section 4(f) Determination for the subject project identified in the Transportation Element of the City of Port St. Lucie Comprehensive Plan (as amended in 2003) and the adopted 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (2035 RLRTP) for the Martin-St. Lucie Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organizations (TPO), completed in February 2011.

The project is needed to address the existing traffic congestion within the City of Port St. Lucie (City) across the North Fork St. Lucie River (NFSLR) and to prevent severe congestion in the future. Currently, only two bridges within the City cross the NFSLR (Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard). These bridges provide a vital link between the communities west and east of the river, and are the only means of east-west emergency evacuation of residents east of the NFSLR. The existing traffic crossing the NFSLR exceeds the capacity of the two existing bridges. Currently, the existing bridges are experiencing substantial traffic congestion and will not be able to meet the projected travel demand across the NFSLR in the future. Even with widening the existing two bridges combined with Transportation Systems Management and Multimodal Alternatives, both bridges would continue to operate beyond their projected traffic-carrying capacity. Without the project, the level of traffic congestion is projected to worsen and mobility along the existing corridors would continue to degrade.

The primary purpose of the project is to alleviate substantial traffic capacity deficiencies across the existing bridges while accommodating future growth.

This ROD is made pursuant to the June 2013 Crosstown Parkway Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS; EIS-2011-02-59-F), which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Decision

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Florida Division, proposes the construction of a new bridge (Crosstown Parkway Extension) across the North Fork St. Lucie River (NFSLR). This decision has been made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated laws, regulations, and orders, and in coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the City of Port St. Lucie (City), and associated consultants. Alternative 1C is the Selected Alternative and is shown in Figure 1. The 6-lane divided highway and bridge will extend the existing Crosstown Parkway from Manth Lane on the west, across the NFSLR to U.S. 1 on the east, a distance of 1.96 miles.

Background

A third crossing of the NFSLR has been recognized as a needed transportation component in the 1989 City of Port St. Lucie Comprehensive Plan, St. Lucie County 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Martin-St. Lucie 2030 RLRTP, and the current Martin-St. Lucie 2035 RLRTP. The new crossing was identified between the existing Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard bridges to address substantial transportation deficiencies resulting from population growth. Subsequently, the City conducted a study to identify an appropriate corridor [Analysis of Potential River Crossing Alternatives (to Reduce Traffic Congestion in the City of Port St. Lucie) - Part I of II, June 2008, (Corridor Report)]. Based on the analysis, it was concluded, with agreement from the advisory groups and coordination with FHWA, that Corridor 5 (Crosstown Parkway Corridor), was the only location for a crossing that met the purpose and need for the project.
The City then examined eight build alternatives plus the Multimodal Alternative and the Transportation System Management (TSM)\(^1\) Alternative within the selected corridor [Crosstown Parkway Extension Corridor Alternatives Report – Part II of II, June 2008, (Alternatives Report)]. Two build alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 4) plus the Multimodal Alternative and TSM Alternative were eliminated because they did not meet the project purpose and need. Further, the results of the analysis indicated that the six alternatives varied in their effectiveness in terms of meeting the project purpose and need and the other evaluation criteria. The reports were reviewed by the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT).

Both reports were posted in the FDOT Environmental Screening Tool (EST) via the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Website to ensure review and comments by the ETAT. No comments were received on the Corridor Report or the Alternatives Report when they were published in the EST, and they were accepted by FHWA in March 2009. FHWA determined that, due to the sensitive social and environmental character of the project area and to ensure a comprehensive comparison and evaluation of alternatives, all six build alternatives would be carried forward as potential viable alternatives for evaluation. The details of these studies are contained in Section 3.1 (Project History) and 3.2 (Alternatives Development) in the EIS.

**Alternatives Considered**

The goal of the Crosstown Extension EIS was to select an alternative to meet the project purpose and need and to provide a safe and accessible transportation solution while minimizing the unavoidable impacts to the environment. Following the alternatives analysis (Alternatives Report), several alternatives were examined: the No Build Alternative, a Multimodal Alternative, a TSM Alternative, and six build alternatives.

**No Build Alternative**

Under the No Build Alternative, no bridge would be constructed; however, other planned roadway improvements contained in adopted 2035 RLRTP would still be constructed. Although this alternative has the positive attributes of avoiding impacts to the natural and the socioeconomic environment, this alternative would not provide needed east-west capacity across the NFSLR and funds would be required to widen other area roadways to meet forecasted traffic demand. It would also not receive the benefits of the compensatory mitigation plan. The No Build Alternative was eliminated because it does not meet the project purpose and need.

**Transportation System Management Alternative**

The TSM Alternative examined system-wide signal timing and phasing optimization, additional turn lanes on Floresta Drive at Prima Vista Boulevard and at Port St. Lucie Boulevard, an additional (third) northbound to westbound left-turn lane on U.S. 1 at Port St. Lucie Boulevard, and an additional southbound right-turn overlap phase on Veterans Memorial Parkway at Port St. Lucie Boulevard. The TSM Alternative was eliminated because the analysis indicated that these techniques would not provide the necessary capacity to accommodate the additional forecasted traffic that would cross the NFSLR for the Design (2037) year (No Build forecast).

\(^1\) Transportation System Management (TSM) refers to the use of operational techniques and intersection improvements.
Multimodal Alternative

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and multimodal strategies were examined to determine whether the capacity deficiencies projected for the existing bridge crossings of Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard could be alleviated by adjusting travel behaviors and distribution through travel incentives/disincentives or by providing alternatives to the typical vehicle. The Multimodal Alternative was eliminated because the analysis showed that these strategies would not offset the substantial capacity deficiencies that exist throughout the transportation network.

Other Alternatives Considered

During the EIS process several alternatives were suggested by the ETAT. Others were evaluated as avoidance alternatives or minimization measures for purposes of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Transportation Act [Section 6.0 (Section 4(f) Evaluation)]:

- Widening of the existing bridges (at Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard) was considered at three different times during the development of the six build alternatives. This alternative was rejected each time because, even with widening, both bridges would continue to operate beyond their capacity. Based on an analysis of the future forecasted conditions, both bridges would be severely congested, even if widened, and they would not be able to service the entire traffic demand that was forecasted to cross the NFSLR. Widening of the bridges would also impact the Savannas Preserve State Park (SPSP) and the NFSLR Aquatic Preserve (AP) because additional bridge piers would be required. In addition, widening of the existing bridges would require the acquisition of approximately 250 businesses that would result in substantial socioeconomic impacts.

- During the review of the Draft EIS (DEIS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) suggested the examination of an additional alternative that would combine the widening of the existing bridges (at Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard) with the Multimodal and TSM alternatives. A two tier analysis was performed that examined widening Prima Vista Boulevard and Port St. Lucie Boulevard to eight and ten lanes, respectively, in combination with a Multimodal and TSM alternative. The analysis showed that, even with these improvements, the Port St. Lucie Boulevard Bridge would still be over capacity. In addition, widening of the bridges would result in the same socioeconomic and environmental impacts discussed above. Thus, this alternative was rejected.

- A cable-stayed bridge (suggested by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was evaluated as an option to completely span the wetlands and aquatic habitat of the AP and SPSP. This type of bridge was determined to be feasible, but was rejected because: it would not avoid impacts to these resources; it would create substantial visual impacts in the residential community; the cost would be 2.5 to 3 times more than conventional bridge construction; and it must be closed to traffic during high winds.

- The USACE, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the NMFS recommended that a tunnel alternative be considered to avoid impacts to the wetlands and aquatic habitat of the AP and the SPSP. A Tunnel Concept Report was prepared, which examined an alternative that would build a pair of

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2 The widening of the existing bridges was considered during the Corridor Report, the Alternatives Report, and the Design Traffic Technical Memorandum (DTTM) prepared for the EIS.
tunnels under the SPSP and the AP. Any alignment within the project area could have been examined, but a straight alignment under the NFSLR was considered to be the most feasible in terms of engineering constraints and cost. Thus, the approximate alignment of Alternative 1C was chosen for the evaluation rather than the curved and less direct alignments of the other build alternatives. Based on this analysis, it was concluded that construction of a tunnel would be feasible. However, this alternative was rejected because: it would not avoid impacts to the SPSP, essential fish habitat, and wetlands because of geometric requirements at the eastern terminus at U.S. 1. To avoid impacts to the SPSP, U.S. 1 would need to be realigned 1,600 feet to the east resulting in a substantial number of additional business and residential relocations. In addition, a tunnel would likely involve intrusive construction techniques for soil stabilization and it could have unanticipated construction impacts (heave, settlement, and impacts on groundwater and wells). A tunnel would cost 7 to 8 times more than a bridge. If U.S. 1 were realigned, costs would be even higher.

- During the review of the DEIS, the USACE suggested the tunnel alternative be reconsidered with an alignment along Alternative 1F or 6B because the eastern terminus could come to grade within upland habitat (to avoid wetland impacts, although the area contains wetlands and uplands). Based on this analysis, it was concluded that construction of a tunnel along Alternative 1F\(^3\) would be feasible. However, this alternative was rejected because: it would not avoid impacts to the SPSP, essential fish habitat, and wetlands because of geometric requirements at the eastern terminus at U.S. 1 (a tunnel would have a wider typical section than a roadway). To avoid impacts to the natural environment, the tunnel could be shifted north but this would result in 17 to 18 additional residential relocations in La Buona Vita. As with the tunnel alternative along the Alternative 1C alignment, it would have the same intrusive construction techniques for soil stabilization, unanticipated construction impacts, and increased costs as described for the tunnel alternative along Alternative 1C.

- A proposal to construct a double-deck bridge over the NFSLR was evaluated in an effort to reduce the footprint of a new bridge. This option was eliminated because, compared to a single-deck bridge, it would have: larger engineering design structural elements; additional impacts in the SPSP and the AP due to the reconstructed structure; more residential and business relocations at the bridge termini; more shading impacts (a taller bridge would result in a wider shadow north of the bridge during the winter months); and higher construction costs.

- Grade-separated flyover ramps at U.S. 1 and Port St. Lucie Boulevard have been discussed by the City since 1998. This alternative was rejected because the ramps would address level of service only at this intersection and would not address the forecasted capacity deficiencies of the existing roadway network.

After evaluating and eliminating these additional alternatives, the No Build Alternative, the TSM Alternative, the Multimodal Alternative, and six build alternatives remained for consideration. All build alternatives include a bridge over the NFSLR and the typical sections for the approach roadways and bridge are the same for all build alternatives. The six build alternatives considered were:

- **Alternative 2A** - Connects Crosstown Parkway via Walters Terrace west of the NFSLR to Veterans Memorial Parkway (formerly known as Midport Road) east of the NFSLR, and ultimately connects with U.S. 1 at the intersection of Walton Road;

\(^3\) Alternatives 1F and 6B have the same alignment on the eastern side of the NFSLR. Alternative 1F was chosen for this analysis because it would have fewer social impacts on the west side of the NFSLR.
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Alternative 2D – Extends Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive to Floresta Drive, then connects to Walters Terrace via Floresta Drive. Traffic would be required to make a right turn and a left turn at the two intersections along Floresta Drive to make the connection to U.S. 1;

Alternative 1C – Extends Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive west of the NFSLR to the existing intersection of U.S. 1 and Village Green Drive;

Alternative 1F – Extends Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive, then curves northeast to connect with U.S. 1 at a new intersection between Village Green Drive and Savanna Club Boulevard;

Alternative 6B – Similar to Alternative 1F, this alternative extends Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive to Floresta Drive. However, it curves northeast beginning at Floresta Drive, and crosses the NFSLR north of Alternative 1F. It connects with U.S. 1 at a new intersection between Village Green Drive and Savanna Club Boulevard; and

Alternative 6A – Extends Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive to Floresta Drive. From there it curves north and then east across the NFSLR to the existing intersection of U.S. 1 and Savanna Club Boulevard.

Alternative Selected

The City, as the project sponsor, selected a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA selection process is described in Section 3.3.1 (Selection of the Preferred Alternative) of the EIS. On November 17, 2011, senior management and staff from the City, the FDOT, and the TPO selected Alternative 1C as the LPA for extending the existing Crosstown Parkway. On January 23, 2012, the Port St. Lucie City Council adopted the selection of Alternative 1C as the LPA for the extension of the Crosstown Parkway from Manth Lane to U.S. 1. Based on this information and after coordination with the public, stakeholders, and the regulatory and cooperating agencies, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) concurred with the identification of Alternative 1C as the Preferred Alternative based on its ability to fulfill the project purpose and need while considering environmental impacts, costs, and technical factors.

The Preferred Alternative travels northeast along West Virginia Drive then crosses the SPSP and three crossings of the NFSLR (main channel, North Coral Reef Waterway, and Evans Creek), bending slightly southward to its eventual terminus with U.S. 1 and its intersection with Village Green Drive at its eastern terminus (Figure 1). This connection at the eastern terminus will create a fourth leg of this existing intersection. Signalization will be required at the existing West Virginia Drive and Floresta Drive 2-way stop controlled intersection. The typical sections for the Preferred Alternative are shown on Figures 2 through 4. The typical section west of the NFSLR will be a suburban cross section consisting of three 12-foot travel lanes and a 14-foot outside shoulder, including a 5-foot paved designated bicycle lane in each direction. Travel lanes will be separated by a 32-foot raised landscaped median. The right of way width for the typical section will be 330 feet to the west bridge approach. Consistent with the Crosstown Parkway to the west, a wide area of green space with a wide pedestrian pathway will be constructed on both sides of the parkway within the right of way. East of Floresta Drive, as the roadway approaches the NFSLR, the cross section will transition to an urban typical section and narrow in width to match the bridge cross section.

As used in this document, a Build Alternative refers to one of the six reasonable alternatives carried through the alternatives analysis and Public Hearing (Alternatives 2A, 2D, 1C, 1F, 6B, and 6A). A Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) refers to the alternative identified from among the build alternatives through the City’s selection process and adopted by the City Council on January 23, 2012, and then recommended to FHWA as the preferred alternative (Alternative 1C). The Preferred Alternative refers to the alternative that FHWA concurred with the identification of as the Preferred Alternative on July 30, 2012.
NOTE: Typical section between Manth Lane to West of the River.
NOTE: Typical section between East of the River to US-1.
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Bridge Typical Sections

Figure 4
The bridge typical section was originally 143 feet from outside edge of railing to outside edge of railing (Figure 4), and consisted of parallel twin structures, each consisting of three 12-foot lanes, a 1-foot 6⅜-inch inside traffic barrier, a 1-foot 6-inch outside traffic barrier between the outside shoulder and sidewalk, an 8-foot inside shoulder, a 10-foot outside shoulder, and an 8-foot sidewalk with a 1-foot pedestrian railing. A 10-foot 11-inch gap between the two structures was included to allow inspection of the under deck and superstructure using a truck mounted mechanical arm platform (to avoid ground-based inspection equipment). Following the selection of the Preferred Alternative, additional avoidance and minimization measures were developed through coordination with NMFS, USACE, and USFWS (July to September 2012) to reduce the impacts of the Preferred Alternative to wetlands, listed species habitats, Section 4(f) use, and essential fish habitat. The bridge typical section was reduced from 143 feet to 103 feet (102’ 8”), and now consists of twin structures, each consisting of two 11-foot travel lanes, one 12-foot outside travel lane, a 5-foot outside shoulder/bicycle lane, a 2-foot 6-inch inside shoulder, a 1-foot 6⅜-inch inside traffic barrier, a 1-foot 6-inch outside traffic barrier between the sidewalk and outside shoulder/bicycle lane, a 6-foot sidewalk, a 9½-inch pedestrian railing, and a 2-inch gap between the structures.

By reducing the bridge typical sections from 143 feet to 103 feet and by assessing shading impacts based on the physical width of the bridge, as opposed to the 157-foot right of way width, wetland impacts decreased from 10.1 acres to 6.83 acres, a reduction of 3.27 acres. The reduced typical section also resulted in a reduction in wetland functional loss from 11.26 to 8.34 functional loss units (includes direct and indirect impacts), a reduction of 2.92 functional loss units (the indirect functional losses were calculated from the edge of the bridge, rather than from the right of way line). Upland impacts were reduced from 6.45 acres to 2.96 acres, a reduction of 3.49 acres of impact. The use of Section 4(f) properties in the SPSP decreased from 2.21 acres to 2.14 acres, a reduction of 0.07 acres while the use of the AP was unchanged (0.02 acre).

East of the NFSLR, the proposed typical section consists of an urban 6-lane cross section with three 12-foot travel lanes and a 5-foot designated bicycle lane in each direction, separated by a 30-foot raised grassed median. The right of way width for this typical section will be 144 feet.

**Section 4(f) Evaluation**

Three properties located within the project area are Section 4(f) properties: North Fork St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve (AP), the Savannas Preserve State Park (SPSP), and Kiwanis Park. A Section 4(f) evaluation was conducted to determine if any feasible and prudent alternatives existed that would completely avoid the use of 4(f) properties [Section 6.0 (Section 4(f) Evaluation)]. Once it was concluded that there were no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives, a least harm analysis was conducted to determine which of the remaining alternatives that used Section 4(f) properties would result in the least overall harm. The process included the incorporation of all possible planning to minimize harm to Section 4(f) properties. The evaluation also examined if the proposed action would have a constructive use and evaluated measures to minimize harm.

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5 As the impervious area on the bridge was reduced, stormwater control requirements also decreased. An assessment of the stormwater runoff calculations determined that the stormwater pond on the Liberty Medical property has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional runoff from the bridge and does not require expansion. This resulted in a reduction of upland habitat impacts (2.47 acres).
All build alternatives will impact a Section 4(f) property. All build alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would result in a use of the AP and all build alternatives except Alternative 6A would use the SPSP (Alternative 6A is located north of the boundaries of the SPSP). Only Alternative 2D would use Kiwanis Park.

Based on the discussions contained in Section 6.2 (Avoidance Alternatives), Section 6.3 (Measures to Minimize Harm), Section 6.4 (Use of Section 4(f) Properties), and Section 6.6 (Evaluation of Alternatives), no alternatives exist to avoid a new crossing of the NFSLR. In addition, no feasible and prudent alternatives exist to completely avoid the AP and the SPSP. Numerous bridging options were examined to bridge the AP and the SPSP. The bridging option with pile bents is the most viable and least harmful option for crossing the AP and the SPSP, although this option will use lands from these properties (except for Alternative 6A, which is located north of the SPSP).

Alternatives 2D, 1F, 6A, and 6B have been eliminated due to their severe social impacts. Of the two remaining alternatives under consideration (2A and 1C), Alternative 1C has the least net harm because it has less impacts to environmental habitat, it has fewer social impacts than any other build alternative, it has the least number of residential relocations, and it requires no business relocations. Thus, for purposes of Section 4(f), Alternative 1C has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Following the selection of the Preferred Alternative, additional avoidance and minimization measures were developed through coordination with the resource agencies, which also reduced the use of Section 4(f) properties. Thus, all possible planning to minimize harm and mitigate for adverse impacts have been incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.

Coordination has been ongoing with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the agency with management authority over the AP and the SPSP, to address the use of these properties and to develop a compensatory mitigation plan for the use of Section 4(f) properties. This resulted in the development of a Proprietary Mitigation Plan, which provides compensatory mitigation for obtaining an easement to cross state-owned lands. Details of the Proprietary Mitigation Plan are contained in Section 6.7 (Compensatory Mitigation for Section 4(f) Uses) in the EIS. A Regulatory Mitigation Plan was also developed for the project. The Regulatory Mitigation Plan provides compensatory mitigation for unavoidable direct and indirect impacts to wetlands, SSL, and navigable and non-navigable waters, as required under federal and state regulations. The Regulatory Mitigation Plan and the Proprietary Mitigation Plan also provide ecological benefits to state-owned lands and the features that qualify them as Section 4(f) properties.

The Preferred Alternative, with the reduced bridge typical section, will use 0.02 acres of the AP. It will use 2.14 acres of the SPSP (reduced from 2.21 acres). It will not use lands from Kiwanis Park. It will affect Halpatiokee Canoe and Nature Trail (Halpatiokee). Halpatiokee is the only land-based public access to the portion of SPSP west of U.S. 1 (the Preferred alternative will have no effect on the portion of the SPSP east of U.S. 1 and motorized boat access will remain unaffected). The existing facility is not well-maintained, is often inundated or flooded, and involves a 0.3-mile portage to the canoe stopover dock on Evans Creek.

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6 “Proprietary” refers to publicly-owned lands. These lands are held in trust by the State of Florida for all residents and are intended to be managed for the public benefit.

7 “Regulatory” refers to a type of governmental power, which allows an entity of the government to regulate private property as well as publicly-owned lands for the public good. The regulatory powers that the government agency has over private and public lands are granted by the state and by federal statutes and regulations.
The FDEP, the agency with management jurisdiction over this facility, has approved the relocation of Halpatiokee 1,000 feet to the south and the construction of an improved facility with a direct connection to Evans Creek.

Based on the analyses contained in this Section 4(f) evaluation, unique or unusual factors are involved in the use of alternatives that avoid Section 4(f) properties, and the cost, social, economic, and environmental impacts, or community disruption resulting from such alternatives reach extraordinary magnitudes. Alternative 1C has the least net harm to Section 4(f) resources and it has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Based on the above considerations, there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the AP and the SPSP and the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the AP and the SPSP resulting from such use.

Major Issues Considered

Full disclosure and documentation of the impacts resulting from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative is contained in Section 5.0 (Environmental Consequences) and is summarized in Section 1.6.3 (Environmental Impacts of the Preferred Alternative) of the EIS. Relevant baseline data and estimated impacts were developed based on information provided during the ETDM process and guidance from the Project Development and Environment Manual (PD&E Manual). The concerns of the agencies and the public were also incorporated in the development of the purpose and need for the project and the development of the project alternatives. The compensatory mitigation plan was developed with coordination with the USACE, USEPA, NMFS, SFWMD, and FDEP. This section contains a summary of the specific and substantive impacts that can be anticipated from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative. For full details of the analysis, refer to the applicable sections of Section 5.0 (Environmental Consequences) in the EIS.

Social and Economic Impacts

The Preferred Alternative will require the relocation of 65 occupied residential properties. If the number of previously purchased developed properties is included (35), a total of 100 improved residential properties will be affected by this alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be aligned along the existing West Virginia Drive on the west side of the NFSLR and it will not pass through or near any residential or commercial areas on the east side of the NFSLR. Of the 65 occupied residential properties to be acquired, it is estimated, based on census data, that 21 minority households (32.31 percent of the total), 17 disabled households (26.15 percent of the total), and 10 elderly households (15.38 percent of the total) will need to be relocated. No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be adversely impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23, no further Environmental Justice analysis is required. No community facilities (non-Section 4(f) resources) will be directly or indirectly affected. The Preferred Alternative will remove approximately 0.04 percent of the City’s tax base and 0.02 percent of the County’s tax base.

A detailed remediation plan has been completed to address all the noncompliance issues associated with the parcels along the Preferred Alternative that were acquired after the November 2000 federalization date. The remediation plan documents the actions taken to bring each parcel into compliance with the appraisal, acquisition, and relocation assistance requirements of the Uniform Act.
Physical Resource Impacts

The Noise Study documented that the Preferred Alternative will impact ten receptors, all of which are residential dwellings. The impacted receptors are located along the north and south sides of the Preferred Alternative, between Floresta Drive and Coral Reef Street. The noise barrier analysis determined that two, 10-foot high noise barriers could benefit all ten of these receptors. Both walls were determined to be feasible and reasonable. The noise barriers will be constructed for the Preferred Alternative at the noise-impacted locations contingent upon the following conditions:

- Detailed noise analyses during the final design process support the need, feasibility, and reasonableness for providing abatement;
- Consideration of the viewpoint of the impacted and benefited receptors has been addressed;
- Safety and engineering aspects as related to the roadway user and the adjacent property owner have been reviewed and any conflicts or issues resolved;
- Precautions will be taken to assure billboards are not blocked by noise barriers;
- Scenic highways will not be affected by the construction of noise barrier walls; and
- Any other mitigating circumstances found in Part 2, Chapter 17 (Noise) of the PD&E Manual have been analyzed and resolved.

The detailed noise analyses and the public coordination to be conducted during detailed design are a project commitment.

Visual Impacts

Through analysis, coordination, and public input, potential visual impacts were identified. A low-level bridge that meets the minimum-required bridge height (per USCG clearance requirements) will minimize visual impacts of the bridge structure. The City will elicit input from the community during one or more City Council meetings to identify opportunities to enhance the community by incorporating amenities, design standards for lighting, visual aspects of the bridge, and landscaping for the project. Public input during the design phase is a project commitment.

Natural Resource Impacts

Following the selection of Alternative 1C as the Preferred Alternative, additional avoidance and minimization measures were developed through coordination with the cooperating and involved agencies. A reduced bridge typical section decreased unavoidable impacts of the Preferred Alternative to wetlands, listed species habitats, and essential fish habitat. Based on the reduced typical section, the Preferred Alternative will have 6.83 acres of unavoidable impacts to wetlands (8.34 functional loss units, which includes indirect impacts) and 2.96 total acres of upland impacts. It will have 6.83 acres of unavoidable impacts to essential fish habitat (same as wetlands) and 1.15 acres of impact to open water habitat (primarily due to shading). No listed species will be adversely affected. A compensatory mitigation plan has been developed to compensate for unavoidable impacts.

The project area is located within the 100-year floodplain as identified on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for St. Lucie County. The floodplain analysis indicates that a latitudinal floodplain encroachment of approximately 1.82 acres is associated with
the Preferred Alternative. The Platt’s Creek mitigation project (see Conceptual Compensatory Mitigation, below) will include excavation within the floodplain that will exceed the encroachment volume, fully mitigating the floodplain impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative.

The constructed bridge will be located in the regulatory floodway but will result in no change to the downstream floodplain zone or result in a reduction of the upstream floodplain zone. No modification to the base floodplain and regulatory floodways is necessary. The proposed action is consistent with the regulatory floodway.

The construction of the drainage structures proposed for this project will cause changes in flood stage and flood limits. These changes will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain values or any significant changes in flood risk or damage. These changes have been reviewed by the appropriate regulatory authorities who have concurred with the determination that there will be no significant impacts. There will not be significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service or emergency evacuation routes. Therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

**Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts have been assessed for the Crosstown Parkway Extension. While there will be adverse impacts to wetlands and other waters through construction, the net impact, including mitigation, is expected to be positive. The project is expected to have positive cumulative impacts regarding air quality since the project will reduce traffic congestion on the streets. A review of the impacts on development indicate a moderate impact to long term development which is consistent with the long term plans of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The surrounding area is mostly developed but there is a trend of increased population density in this coastal area.

**Conceptual Compensatory Mitigation**

Throughout the project development process and as documented in the EIS, the City has evaluated the project through a sequence of avoidance, minimization, and then, compensation for unavoidable impacts, in accordance with mitigation requirements for wetland impacts pursuant to the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR, Part 230), USACE Regulations (33 CFR, Part 332), and associated guidance.

During the ETDM process for the EIS, the USFWS assigned a degree of effect of “Dispute Resolution” for the categories of Special Designations, Wetlands, and Wildlife and Habitat. Subsequently, the Secretary of the FDEP suggested the City initiate a Conceptual Environmental Resource Permit (Conceptual ERP) concurrently with the EIS process. The purpose of the Conceptual ERP was to provide resource agencies with technical data and analysis necessary to evaluate the project. To secure an easement to cross state-owned lands and to resolve the dispute resolution, the City pursued an ambitious comprehensive mitigation plan that included a number of mitigation projects within the NFSLR watershed that were developed specifically for this project. This included a Proprietary Mitigation Plan described in Section 1.6.8 (Section 4(f) Evaluation) of the EIS and a Regulatory Mitigation Plan that is described in this section. The Regulatory Mitigation Plan provides compensatory mitigation for unavoidable direct and indirect impacts to wetlands (same as essential fish habitat), SSL, and navigable and non-navigable waters, as required under federal and state regulations. The Proprietary Mitigation Plan provides compensatory mitigation for obtaining an easement to cross state-owned lands and resulted in the informal resolution of the dispute.
The Regulatory Mitigation Plan consists of using the Platt’s Creek Compensatory Mitigation Site (Platt’s Creek), which is being developed specifically for this project, and the purchase of credits at the Bear Point Mitigation Bank. Total wetland functional loss due to the Preferred Alternative is 8.34 functional loss units, including secondary functional loss, and impacts to mangroves. Of the total credits at Platt’s Creek, 11.25 functional gain units\(^8\) will be allocated as compensatory mitigation for regulatory wetland impacts for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Both the SFWMD and the USACE have stated that this allocation will satisfy the regulatory component for any of the build alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative. The remaining functional gain units at Platt’s Creek are reserved for future County projects.

Platt’s Creek will be used to offset impacts to the wood stork Core Foraging Area (CFA) associated with the Preferred Alternative. A wood stork biomass calculation was completed to ensure the Platt’s Creek site adequately mitigates for unavoidable impacts to CFA. The 49.34 acres of wetlands to be created will consist of 13.45 acres of short hydroperiod wetlands and 35.8 acres of long hydroperiod wetlands providing 11.04 kilograms (kg) and 110.54 kg of wood stork forage, respectively. Of the total created wetlands, 29.14 acres will be allocated towards the Preferred Alternative and will consist of 13.45 acres of short hydroperiod wetlands (all short hydroperiod wetlands) and 15.6 acres of long hydroperiod wetlands providing 11.04 Kg and 55.15 Kg of wood stork forage, respectively. The remaining wood stork forage is reserved for future County projects.

The Preferred Alternative will have unavoidable impacts to 0.19 acres of mangrove habitat, resulting in 0.22 functional loss units. However, under the “worst case” approach, the highest impacts to mangroves are due to Alternative 2A/2D, which resulted in a total functional loss of 0.34 units. Therefore, as agreed for this project, the City will purchase 0.5 credits at the Bear Point Mitigation Bank (the freshwater wetland mitigation project at Platt’s Creek will not be able to restore/create mangrove habitat). The mitigation credit requirements at the Bear Point Mitigation Bank have been in accordance with E-WRAP (Bear Point Mitigation Bank evaluation method). In addition, a Proximity Factor Worksheet was completed for the USACE because the Bear Point Mitigation Bank is outside of the service area for the bank. The USACE and the SFWMD have stated that the amount of credits is appropriate mitigation for mangrove losses. The City has paid a reservation fee for the purchase of 0.5 credits and the balance will be paid in full when the Record of Decision is signed.

The Regulatory Mitigation Plan has been developed in conjunction with the regulatory agencies and in accordance with UMAM and E-WRAP (Bear Point Mitigation Bank), which calculated the functional gains of the mitigation plans and balanced those gains with the functional losses of the Preferred Alternative. After the Record of Decision has been signed, Platt’s Creek will be completed. With the compensatory mitigation plan, unavoidable impacts related to the Preferred Alternative will be compensated in a manner that will result in no net loss to wetlands, essential fish habitat, or to protected species or their habitats. Further, it is anticipated that the mitigation plan will result in a net positive benefit for the natural environment and for the citizens of Florida.

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\(^8\) The functional loss calculations described in the EIS are those contained in the Conceptual Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) Application. The Conceptual ERP Application assumed a “worst case” scenario, which combined the highest amount of impact from all build alternatives. After the width of the bridge was reduced, the actual functional loss due to the Preferred Alternative (8.34 acres) is less than those calculated for the Conceptual ERP Application (11.25 acres). These acreage differences will also appear in UMAM calculations for the Conceptual ERP Application.
Measures to Minimize Harm

The project incorporates all practicable measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm. Although some impacts will occur during construction, numerous specific commitments have been made regarding engineering, environmental Section 4(f), and community issues. These commitments are summarized in this section. Construction activities will have air, noise, vibration, water quality, traffic flow, and visual impacts for those residents and travelers within the immediate vicinity of the project. The construction phase of the project will last for several years.

The air quality impact will be temporary and will be primarily in the form of emissions from diesel-powered construction equipment and dust from embankment and haul road areas. Air pollution associated with the creation of airborne particles would be controlled through the use of watering or the application of other controlled materials in accordance with FDOT’s Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, as directed by the Project Engineer.

During the construction phase of the project, short-term noise will be generated by stationary and mobile construction equipment. The construction noise will be temporary at any location and will be controlled by adherence to the most recent edition of the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. Residences were identified as the only land use potentially sensitive to vibration during construction. During final design, vibration sensitive sites will be confirmed and if it is determined that provisions to control vibration are necessary, the project’s construction provisions will be modified as needed.

Stormwater runoff from construction sites can have a short-term impact on water quality by discharging sediment-laden water and other pollutants generated by construction equipment, material storage, and debris into surface waters. Sediment from soil-disturbing operations is the primary potential construction pollutant that can result from clearing and grubbing, utility and drainage system installation, excavation and filling, grading, stockpile and staging areas, dewatering, vehicle tracking, and dust. To prevent silt-laden construction runoff from leaving the construction site, temporary stabilization and structural measures, minimization of disturbances to the existing vegetation, and preservation of existing drainage patterns will be incorporated into the construction operation phase. To control and minimize potential water quality impacts generated by these types of construction operations for a build alternative, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in compliance with Chapter 62-621 FAC, will be incorporated into the project as required by FDEP. The SWPPP will include structural and nonstructural pollution prevention measures that will minimize erosion and sedimentation. In addition, water quality impacts resulting from erosion and sedimentation will be controlled in accordance with FDOT’s Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and through the use of BMPs. The controls placed in each work area prior to sediment-generating operations will be maintained until final stabilization has been implemented in each contributing area.

The construction of the roadway and bridge may require excavation of unsuitable material, placement of embankments, and use of materials, such as limerock, asphaltic concrete, and portland cement concrete. For the residents living along the right of way, some of the materials stored for the project may be displeasing visually. Demucking will performed in compliance with Section 120 of the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. Debris will be removed in accordance with local and state regulatory agencies permitting this operation. The contractor will be responsible for his methods of
controlling pollution on haul roads; in borrow pits, other material pits, and areas used for disposal of waste materials from the project. Temporary erosion control features as specified in the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104, will consist of temporary grassing, sodding, mulching, sandbagging, slope drains, sediment basins, sediment checks, artificial coverings, and berms.

Maintenance of traffic and sequence of construction will be planned and scheduled so as to minimize traffic delays throughout construction. The local news media will be notified in advance of road closings and other construction-related activities, which could excessively inconvenience the community so that motorists, residents, and business persons can plan travel routes in advance. The project's webpage will contain updated information regarding the project and construction-related information. Signs will be used, as appropriate, to provide notice of road closures and other pertinent information to the travelling public. A sign providing the name, address, and telephone number of a contact person will be displayed on site to assist the public in obtaining immediate answers to questions and logging complaints about project activity. Access to all businesses and residences will be maintained to the extent practicable through controlled construction scheduling. The present traffic congestion may become worse during stages of construction where narrow lanes may be necessary. Traffic delays will be controlled to the extent possible where many construction operations are in progress at the same time.

The City has committed to build a bridge over the AP and the SPSP using a top down construction method, or construction from temporary platforms, trestles or other similar methods to avoid impacts to the maximum extent practicable. The top down construction method constructs a bridge span from the previously completed span. Construction from temporary platforms, trestles or other similar methods constructs a temporary work platform known as a “trestle.” These two methods are practicable and are common construction techniques used throughout the industry. The description of construction methods in this section is based on coordination with contractors familiar with this type of construction and represents the best available information at this stage of project development. The actual methods used to build the bridge may vary from these descriptions, depending on a given contractor’s experience on projects with similar conditions, equipment owned by the contractor, final project commitments, and permit requirements.

Construction impacts in the EIS are based on use of a trestle since this will provide a conservative estimate of the temporary impacts (0.24 acres in wetlands based on the 103-foot bridge width along Alternative 1C). Consistent with standard industry practice, the trestle was assumed to be constructed using pipe piles for foundations and H-beams for framing and bracing. The deck of the trestle consists of crane mats, which are 4 ft x 1 ft x various length timber beams placed adjacent to each other, perpendicular to the length of the trestle (imagine a boardwalk or dock, with the surface boards pushed together). The trestle will traverse adjacent to the bridge within the bridge right of way. The trestle assumed for this project consists of pile bent foundations made up of five 24-inch diameter pipe piles. There are 25-foot spans between pile bents, and the overall width of the trestle is 40 feet wide. Perpendicular “fingers” will be constructed within the bridge footprint to assist with construction.

The trestle will be constructed first, building the next span from the previous span. The crane that uses the trestle as a temporary platform will be used to construct subsequent sections of the trestle. After the trestle is complete, it will be used to drive piles and place beams for the permanent bridge. Since the crane on the trestle does not bear any weight on the bridge, no increase in member sizes due to construction loads to the permanent bridge will be required, unless the bridge is used to deliver materials to the crane. The trestle can be designed to handle any material delivery operations. The trestle will be low to the ground so
any trees below the trestle will have to be cut before constructing it, and tree stumps and vegetation where the pile bents will be placed must be removed.

It is possible that barges will be used within the main channels of the NFSLR during construction. However, with the project commitments outlined in the EIS, temporary impacts will be minimal and passage by aquatic species will not be impeded. Haul roads within the wetland areas will not be used.

The first step of construction for the bridge will be to remove the trees and stumps where the pile bents will be installed, and to cut trees in the bridge path that will interfere with the construction of the bridge (trees that are higher than the elevation of the bridge). To do this, the contractor will need light machinery; no haul roads within the bridge easement will be allowed. Foundations (piles) can then be placed from the trestle.

If top down construction is used, the first piles can be driven from the top of the approach MSE walls that will be constructed at either end of the bridge. A standard crane on tracks ("crawler") can be used to drive the piles and place the beams. Once the beams are placed and the deck is poured and cured, the crane will relocate to the end of the completed portion of the bridge and repeat the process. Materials can be supplied to the crane from the completed bridge. Another form of top down construction is to construct the bridge using a specially designed gantry crane system. Gantry cranes are not standard equipment but are custom-designed for each project. A gantry crane would use a steel truss that is cantilevered out over the completed portion of the bridge. Piles can be driven and beams can be placed with the same piece of equipment. However, the bridge may not be long enough to obtain economy of scale employing the gantry crane method.

Construction could also be accomplished by utilizing a hybrid method where components of both trestle and crane/gantry techniques are included. If hybrid construction is used, the foundations (piles) can be placed using a smaller trestle than required for the trestle-only technique discussed above. Once the foundations (piles) are installed, a beam launcher could be used to place the beams. A beam launcher is a gantry type rig that is smaller than the one needed for top down construction, and does not need to be custom designed. After the beams are placed, the deck can be poured.

The construction time of the bridge can be reduced by using sequencing and accelerated bridge construction (ABC) techniques. For example, both bridges could be built at the same time by building the second from the top of the first. Another example is to build the bridges from both directions. Accelerated bridge techniques include using precast bridge elements (beams, bent caps, deck segments, etc.) to reduce the need to build forms and concrete curing time. If either the top down or the trestle methods of construction is used, the use of barges as a construction platform is likely in the main channel to minimize impacts from a trestle, and ensure the channel remains open for navigation. The trestle will be constructed with a gap sufficient to allow a barge to be present while maintaining sufficient navigation clearance [Section 5.3.18 (Navigation)].

Top down construction methods from temporary platforms, trestles or other similar methods avoid the need to stage materials or equipment in wetlands and wildlife habitat. Barges in the main channel could potentially affect aquatic species and wildlife passage. Construction methods will limit actual permanent ground construction impacts to the fill resulting from concrete piling installed from above. Temporary impacts will occur during the placement of the permanent piles and were estimated for each build alternative, including the Preferred Alternative. These temporary impacts will result from pile-driving templates (steel framework required to align and plumb the piling), ground heave immediately adjacent to
each pile, and any spoils due to shallow augering required to seat the piling prior to driving. The total quantity of permanent construction impacts resulting from the bridge piling varies by alternative according to the length of the bridge and number of bents. These impacts are less than one-quarter acre for all build alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative.

The USACE expressed concern over the methods of geotechnical (soil borings) investigations in the natural habitats [Section 8.5 (Scoping Process)]. During geotechnical/soil investigations, the use of specialized equipment, such as rubber tire mounted equipment, amphibious track rigs, rigs mounted on all-terrain vehicles, and tripod drill rigs will be used to provide the least damaging methods to obtain geotechnical information. In addition, all applicable provisions contained in FDOT’s Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction will be followed to minimize impacts. These are included as project commitments.

**Monitoring or Enforcement Program**

The avoidance and minimization process has been documented in Section 3.0 (Alternatives Including Proposed Action) and has been summarized in Section 7.1 (Avoidance) and Section 7.2 (Minimization) of the EIS. The proposed project incorporates all practicable measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm.

All appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize impacts that will result from the proposed project, including direct, indirect, and temporary construction impacts. An extensive process of coordination (since 2003) with City, County, state, and federal agencies has yielded a number of minimization strategies that have already been incorporated into the Preferred Alternative. The City, with the oversight of the FDOT District 4, is committed to the following monitoring and enforcement measures for this project.

- Coordination with the community, and resource and regulatory agencies will be undertaken to address visual impacts and potential enhancements to the bridge design elements in an effort to address the visual impacts of the bridge.
- Coordination with the emergency responders will be continued during design to familiarize them with proposed roadway modifications in the area.
- Coordination with the USCG will take place during the design phase with regard to permitting the bridges over the North Fork St. Lucie River (NFSLR) and its tributaries and the determination of any navigational aids required.
- Construction of a new bridge over the NFSLR will meet or exceed the existing clearances provided at Port St. Lucie Boulevard.
- A *Bridge Hydraulic Report* and floodplain compensation analysis will be conducted during the design phase.
- A complete and thorough hydrologic and hydraulic analysis examining surface water attenuation, hydraulic grade line clearance encroachments, and friction losses will be modeled during detailed design using the Advanced Interconnected Pond Routing hydraulic software, commonly referred to as ICPR (AdICPR).
- A site specific contamination assessment including soil and groundwater testing will be conducted prior to construction.
- Bridge piers located in the water will be oriented to avoid restriction of water movement and to maximize the River’s hydraulic section.
During construction, all provisions of the FDOT’s most recent version of the *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* will be followed.

- Maintenance of traffic and sequence of construction will be planned and scheduled to minimize traffic delays throughout the project. Access to all businesses and residences will be maintained to the extent practicable through controlled construction scheduling.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be incorporated into the proposed project. These facilities will be designed to continue the concept adopted for the Crosstown Parkway west of Manth Lane. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be carried across the NFSLR to U.S. 1.
- A wide area of green space with a shared-use pathway will be constructed on both sides of the parkway within the right of way that could be used by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Landscaping within the right of way will be incorporated where space and safety allow.
- Visual enhancements and additions that would widen the bridge beyond that required for roadway safety and capacity needs will not be considered (to avoid and minimize impacts to the natural habitats associated with the AP and the SPSP). Thus, overlooks or enlarged seating areas on the bridge will not be considered. These types of features, if included, will be limited to bridge approaches or other areas that would not affect natural lands.
- The City will elicit input from the community on project design elements associated with the design of lighting and visual aspects of the bridge, and landscaping for the project during one or more City Council meetings.
- The City will elicit input regarding compatibility, safety, and engineering of noise walls with adjacent land users, especially by officials having jurisdiction over such land uses.
- A new signalized crosswalk will be constructed at Floresta Drive.
- Formal appraisals for properties to be acquired will be obtained to ensure compliance with federal and state rules and regulations.
- A Right of Way and Relocation Program will be carried out in accordance with Section 339.09 Florida Statutes (FS) and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970.
- The stormwater management design will include 150 percent of the required water quality treatment volume because the project will discharge into the NFSLR, an Outstanding Florida Water.
- To control and minimize potential water quality impacts generated by construction operations, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in compliance with Chapter 62-621 FAC, will be incorporated into the project as required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). To prevent silt-laden construction runoff from leaving the construction site, temporary stabilization and structural measures, minimization of disturbances to the existing vegetation, and preservation of existing drainage patterns to the extent possible during the construction phase will be incorporated into the construction operation phase.
- Prior to construction, surveys for protected species will be conducted according to established survey protocols and guidance provided by regulatory agencies.
- Prior to any construction, a site-specific survey would be conducted to determine the presence of bald eagle nests in or near the construction area and the survey will be coordinated with the USFWS and the FWC, as needed.
- During the design and permitting phase, a site survey will be conducted to determine if any gopher tortoises are present within the construction zone/right of way and within 25 feet of any other construction-related activity (e.g., ponds, staging areas, etc.).
- During the design and permitting phase, a site survey will be conducted to determine if any Florida pine snakes are present in the project area.
During the design and permitting phase, a site survey will be conducted to determine if any gopher frogs are present in the project area.

The NMFS “Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions” will be followed during all construction activities.

An addendum to the Essential Fish Habitat Report will be prepared to fulfill the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

During construction, the USFWS guidance provided in “Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake” will be followed.

Standard manatee protection measures will be enforced during bridge construction.

Specialized equipment will be used during geotechnical/soil investigations in sensitive habitats to minimize impacts of drilling rigs. This may include such equipment as rubber tire mounted equipment, amphibious track rigs, rigs mounted on all-terrain vehicles, and tripod drill rigs.

The mitigation measures and other provisions described in the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 26, 2010, and the Memorandum of Agreement dated July 27, 2010 (Appendix L of the EIS), will be employed.

Lands disturbed during construction activities will be fully restored in accordance with permit conditions.

A top down construction method, or construction methods from temporary platforms, trestles, or other similar methods, will be employed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to environmentally-sensitive resources.

During final design, vibration sensitive sites will be confirmed and if it is determined that provisions to control vibration are necessary, the project’s construction provisions will be modified as needed.

The bridge will be designed to bridge over the NFSLR and adjacent wetlands, minimizing fill on the east end through use of MSE walls.

The FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction contains numerous techniques and specifications that would be implemented to minimize impacts to natural habitats, residential neighborhoods, and businesses during construction. Specific minimization techniques would be further explored during the detailed design.

To mitigate for noise impacts, construction of feasible noise abatement measures at noise-impacted locations will be undertaken contingent upon the following conditions:

- Detailed noise analyses during the final design process support the need, feasibility, and reasonableness for providing abatement;
- Consideration of the viewpoint of the impacted and benefited receptors has been addressed;
- Safety and engineering aspects as related to the roadway user and the adjacent property owner have been reviewed and any conflicts or issues resolved;
- Precautions will be taken to assure billboards are not blocked by noise barriers;
- Scenic highways will not be affected by the construction of noise barrier walls; and
- Any other mitigating circumstances found in Part 2, Chapter 17 (Noise) of the PD&E Manual have been analyzed and resolved.

The FDOT Reevaluation Process serves to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations prior to the advancement of the proposed project to the next major production phase. This process also provides the mechanisms by which commitments made during the project development process are identified, updated, and their status confirmed. Any new commitments or laws that may become effective since the approval of the original final environmental document are addressed in the Reevaluation. As a result, the environmental documentation on a project is always current with prevailing
rules and regulations, as well, as, any commitments resulting from the project development process, including permit requirements. FDOT District 4 tracks these commitments through a database to manage and access the large and diverse amount of data in a timely manner.

**Project Funding**

Using a combination of City, Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), FDOT, and Federal funding sources, the project is fully programmed and funded for preliminary engineering, right of way and construction phases. Documentation of the funding for this project can be found in the adopted (2014 to 2018) St. Lucie County TPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the FDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the adopted 2035 TPO Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP). The estimated project cost is $155,000,000. Planning consistency requirements have been met for this project. **Table 1**, below, outlines the planned implementation of this action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Time Frame (Fiscal Year)</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Engineering¹</td>
<td>$25,000,000</td>
<td>&lt;2014 – 2015</td>
<td>Local, State, Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of Way²</td>
<td>$18,000,000</td>
<td>&lt;2014 – 2019</td>
<td>Local, State, Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction³</td>
<td>$112,000,000</td>
<td>2014⁴</td>
<td>Local, State, Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$155,000,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adopted 2014 – 2018 TPO TIP, Approved FDOT STIP, Amended and Approved TPO 2035 LRTP, and City of Port St. Lucie.

¹ Preliminary Engineering includes PD&E, design, mitigation and utilities.
² Right of Way is on-going during the Design-Build Contract.
³ Funded in 2014, to be let as a Design-Build project.
⁴ Construction is expected to be complete in 2018.
Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement

The EIS was approved for circulation on November 14, 2013 and the notice of its availability was published in the Federal Register on November 29, 2013, with a request that comments be postmarked by December 30, 2013. The FHWA, in coordination with the FDOT, has taken into consideration all pertinent correspondence, documents, and technical reports postmarked through December 30, 2013. FDOT and FHWA have adequately responded to all substantive comments received from interested parties regarding the content and accuracy of the EIS and supporting studies for the selection of Alternative 1C as the Preferred Alternative.

Summary of Comments and Responses Concerning the EIS

Four comments/questions were received from local, State and Federal agencies, including USEPA; State Historic Preservation Office; St. Lucie Public School Board; and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC). None of the agencies expressed opposition to the project. The State Historic Preservation Officer stated that cultural resources have been adequately addressed. The St. Lucie Public School Board expressed their support for Alternative 1C, the TCRPC commented that, while the project will have significant environmental impacts, the overall plans to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts provide adequate compensation to make the project consistent with their Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP). They further noted that the project furthers Strategy 7.1.1 of the SRPP which is to develop a balanced, complete and fully integrated transportation system; and that the project will benefit and promote livability in the region. The USEPA stated that the FEIS addresses the majority of their concerns and had two remaining questions regarding mitigation costs among the alternatives, and whether one of the sidewalks could be eliminated.

There were 44 comments received from the public. Of those, 33 stated their opposition to the Preferred Alternative (1C) due to the impacts it would cause primarily to the natural environment. This included three that referred to “letters to the editor” they had written which expressed their opposition. Specifically, comments noted that the project would result in considerable impacts to the Savannas Preserve State Park, North Fork St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve, wetlands, and habitat, and Halpatiokee Canoe Trail. In addition, some comments stated that the project should not be built in an area that was purchased by the State through Conservation Land Funds to be set aside for preservation. Many of the individuals who opposed the selection of Alternative 1C, noted that one of the other five build alternatives be considered since there would be a lesser degree of impacts to the natural environment.

There were 4 public comments received that favored the project noting that the project should be built as soon as possible and that the other bridges have benefited the community and environment in a number of positive ways. There were 6 public comments that asked specific questions about the project. There was 1 public comment received from a former City official who provided information about an early 1990’s study that discussed the future of an East-West road over the St. Lucie River.

The agency and public comments are summarized in the matrix below. Agency comments are presented first, followed by the public comments. Copies of the agency and public comments are included in Appendices A and B, respectively, of this Record of Decision.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Commenter</th>
<th>Comment Summary</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitigation Cost is Same for All Build Alternatives</td>
<td>Maher Budeir - USEPA</td>
<td>USEPA questioned why mitigation costs are the same for all alternatives when functional losses are different.</td>
<td>As a result of coordination with federal, State and local agencies, it was established through a Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix L of the FEIS) that if a build alternative were selected, the mitigation measures (Appendix M of the FEIS) would be the same for all build alternatives regardless of which alternative was selected. It was recognized that the functional loss would be different for each alternative. However, the City agreed to a proprietary mitigation package based on a hybrid assessment of the highest impacts from each of the proposed alternatives. In this way if a build alternative were selected, the City provided a guarantee to the FDEP that sufficient mitigation would be provided regardless of the alternative chosen; and the FDEP agreed to provide an easement across the Aquatic Preserve in any of the locations under their jurisdiction. Thus, the mitigation cost was the same for each build alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elimination of Sidewalk to Reduce Bridge Typical Section</td>
<td>USEPA</td>
<td>The USEPA recommended that pedestrian crossover bridges be constructed on each end of the bridge and that sidewalk be eliminated along one side of the roadway to reduce the bridge footprint width by 6 to 8 feet.</td>
<td>The FEIS concluded that elimination of one sidewalk would not be considered due to the safety hazard associated with the need for pedestrians to cross 6 lanes of traffic at either end of the proposed bridge. It is presumed that the comment does not disagree with this conclusion, and is recommending grade-separated pedestrian overpasses at each end of the proposed bridge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Area</td>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>Comment Summary</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elimination of Sidewalk to Reduce Bridge Typical Section</td>
<td>USEPA (continued)</td>
<td>The USEPA recommended that pedestrian crossover bridges be constructed on each end of the bridge and that sidewalk be eliminated along one side of the roadway to reduce the bridge footprint width by 6 to 8 feet.</td>
<td>In order to provide crossover bridges on both sides of the proposed bridge to facilitate the crossing maneuver, a series of ramp structures would be needed both north and south of the road, on both the west and east ends of the bridge to carry users up and over the roadway. This would increase the impacts within the park land and wetlands on the east side of the bridge. Further, in order to facilitate two-way traffic for pedestrians and recreational users (e.g. in-line skaters, joggers, and bicyclists not inclined to use the proposed on-street bicycle lanes) the width of the single sidewalk would need to be designed as a shared use pathway with a width of 10 to 14 feet. This would greatly reduce (if not nullify) the potential benefits associated with eliminating the sidewalk on one side, while causing an increase in impacts. Also, the provision of an overpass does not force users to make use of the overpass, and can create a more hazardous situation if they choose not to use it. In an urban setting, roadways with sidewalk along only one side would typically be considered more hazardous than roadways with sidewalk along both sides. (continued on next page)</td>
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</table>
The EPA recommended that pedestrian crossover bridges be constructed on each end of the bridge and that sidewalk be eliminated along one side of the roadway to reduce the bridge footprint width by 6 to 8 feet.

(continued)

Additionally, eliminating sidewalk along one side of the bridge would be contrary to FDOT and FHWA policies which recommend that bridges have sidewalks along both sides when the roadway leading up to the bridge has sidewalks along both sides of the road. Specifically, FDOT Plans Preparation Manual, Section 8.3.1, states that, “If sidewalks are constructed on the approaches to bridges, they should be continued across the structure”. According to the Federal Highway Administration (University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, Lesson 9: Walkways, Sidewalks, and Public Spaces (Page 4) Publication Number: FHWA-HRT-05-133), “Sidewalks should be placed on both sides of bridges. Under extreme conditions, sidewalks can be used on one side only, but this should only be done when safe crossings can be provided on both ends of the bridge. When sidewalks are placed on only one side, they should be wider in order to accommodate larger volumes of pedestrian traffic”. For the reasons discussed here and in the FEIS, the elimination of sidewalk from one side of the bridge is not being considered further.

This office reviewed the sections of the FEIS addressing cultural resources and it is their opinion that those resources have been adequately addressed.

Comment noted, and is included in the Administrative Record.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Commenter</th>
<th>Comment Summary</th>
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<td>School Transportation and Services</td>
<td>Marty E. Sanders, Superintendent – St Lucie Public School. Board</td>
<td>Commented that the project will reduce the time students spend on school buses. The comment noted that “either route 1C provides one of the best alternatives for school transportation and service and that (the School Board) supports route 1C.”</td>
<td>Comment noted, and is included in the Administrative Record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency with Regional Planning</td>
<td>Stephanie Heidt, Administrative/ICR Coordinator - TCRPC</td>
<td>The proposed project will have a significant impact on many existing homeowners and several sensitive environmental areas, including the North Fork St. Lucie River, Aquatic Preserve, and Savannas Preserve State Park, which are significant regional resources. The proposed wetland-related impacts are allowable under Council’s wetland protection Policy 6.6.1.1, because they meet the terms of the following exception: Such an activity is water dependent or, due to the unique geometry of the site, minimal impact is the unavoidable consequence of development for uses which are appropriate given site characteristics.</td>
<td>Comment noted, and is included in the Administrative Record.</td>
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<td>Consistency with Regional Planning</td>
<td>Stephanie Heidt, Administrative/ICR Coordinator - TCRPC (continued)</td>
<td>The overall plans to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts provide adequate compensation to make the project consistent with the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. The project furthers Strategy 7.1.1: Develop a balanced, complete and fully integrated transportation system which, at a minimum, includes a road system designed to complement and supplement the core mass transit system and pedestrian and bicycle connections. The Crosstown Parkway Extension will benefit and promote livability in the region by expanding a limited east-west roadway network, enhancing connectivity of two of Florida’s Strategic Intermodal Systems, creating a multi-purpose linear park facility with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to adjacent residential communities, and accommodating the expansion of the regional transit system. Once complete, the project will provide an additional hurricane and emergency evacuation route and achieve an acceptable level of service.</td>
<td>Comment noted, and is included in the Administrative Record.</td>
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| Bridge Height| David Kaplan, President – River Park Neighborhood Association            | Requested that the Crosstown Parkway bridge over the NFSLR be higher than the minimum Coast Guard requirement in order to allow larger vessels to pass through.                                                                 | As noted in Section 3.2.2.2.4.2 (Bridge Clearance Requirements) of the FEIS, the minimum standard for vertical clearance for this project as established by the USCG is 18.6 feet. Presently the preliminary design is slightly higher than the minimum. The final vertical clearance may be different, and will be developed during the final design phase.

Environmental, social and economic factors were taken into consideration when determining elements of the project. There is also an inherent desire to keep the bridge profile as low as possible to minimize the visual impacts that the bridge will have on home owners near the river. In addition, a bascule bridge or increasing the vertical clearance at Port St Lucie Boulevard are not in FDOT’s current Work Program nor the long range plan. |
| Project Meetings | Tom L.                                                              | When is the next meeting on the Crosstown Parkway                                                                                                                                     | The City of Port St. Lucie will announce to the public if this project is approved. The design phase would be next, and public meetings will be announced at that time. Please visit the City's web site: http://pslcrosstownparkway.com/community.html for further information. |
| Alternative Selection | Paul Raymond                                                                 | Why or who would have made the decision on the location for the bridge? Why was a decision made that was not either the cheapest or the least environmental impact?                                                                 | At the time of the public hearing, FHWA had not identified a preferred alternative for the project. It is the FHWA-Florida Division’s practice to hear responses from the public and other agencies prior to identifying a preferred alternative on a project that will likely have significant impacts. (continued on next page) |
### Issue Area

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<td>Alternative Selection (continued)</td>
<td>Why or who would have made the decision on the location for the bridge? Why was a decision made that was not either the cheapest or the least environmental impact? (continued)</td>
<td>For this project, we obtained public feedback and coordinated with other agencies for approximately ten months prior to doing so, considering many issues, including the issue of cost that you have mentioned. Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS, which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Section 3.3.1 of the Final EIS summarizes the process and analyses that were used to identify a preferred alternative. Comments, such as yours, are part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flyover at US 1</td>
<td>Will there a bridge on US 1 so that north bound traffic does not need to make a left turn at a traffic signal?</td>
<td>Roadway congestion is commonly measured by Levels of Service (LOS) with grades from A being the best to F being the worst. Breakdown conditions would be LOS F. From a traffic control perspective, grade-separated flyover ramps are typically considered in situations where at-grade solutions are not effective and are usually used where one of the roadways is a freeway or highly controlled roadway (i.e. an interchange on I-95). There are instances where grade separation might be considered for two arterial roads when the congestion is extremely severe (LOS F). These solutions require more right or way, and have a higher construction cost than at-grade intersections, therefore, they are used carefully and only when the impact and cost can be justified by the benefit. (continued on next page)</td>
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<td>Flyover at US 1</td>
<td>Ed Strayer (continued)</td>
<td>Will there be a bridge on US 1 so that north bound traffic does not need to make a left turn at a traffic signal? (continued)</td>
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<td>Right of Way Impact</td>
<td>Jerry and Barbara Swain</td>
<td>Suggested that instead of acquiring the easement located on their property, that the city could move their plans of widening Floresta more to the east in order to avoid interrupting their property. Also, asked if some type of wall would be built on either Floresta or Crosstown, preventing some of the highway traffic noise?</td>
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<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Ray Treacy</td>
<td>In the last paragraph in Section 2.22 of the EIS it is mentioned that, “The preferred alternative will improve emergency response time compared to the No Build Alternative.” Doesn’t a hospital on the western side do a lot more to improve response time? Why wasn’t this new hospital mentioned?</td>
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<td>Martin</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>33 comments were received expressing opposition to the selection of Alternative 1C, primarily due to the impacts it would have on the natural environment and park.</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 comments were received expressing support for the project. They wanted the project to be built quickly, and noted the benefits the project would have on the community.</td>
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### Issue Area

Previous River Crossing Study

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<td>James Lawless (former Mayor of City of Port St. Lucie)</td>
<td>Commenter referenced an earlier 1990’s study that included an alignment that curved south and had an elevated “fly-over” going over the St. Lucie River, and then it tied into Walton Road. He indicated that this would lessen the impact on the Village Green Dr. Industrial Park area (located east of US-1). His recollection was that the route would have less environmental impact, and he suggested that this could still be done; and that the permitting, planning and funding should be explored in depth due to the City’s current debt level.</td>
<td>A follow-up phone call with Mr. Lawless on February 10, 2014, confirmed that his comment was related to an earlier study conducted by the City in 1990 (as noted in Table 3.1, page 3.4 of the EIS). Alternative 2A in the EIS follows the same alignment discussed by Mr. Lawless from that report. Based on the analysis and feedback received during the course of the EIS study, Alternative 1C was selected as the Preferred Alternative as documented in Section 3 (Alternatives Including Proposed Action), Section 5 (Environmental Consequences), and Section 6 (Section 4(f) Evaluation) of the EIS.</td>
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### Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons and based on consideration of all the social, economic, and environmental evaluations contained in the EIS, with the input received from other agencies, organizations, and the public; the FHWA has determined that the EIS Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1C) is hereby the Selected Alternative. Therefore it is my decision to adopt this alternative as the proposed action for this project.

James Christian  
Florida Division Administrator  

2/24/14  
Date

Record of Decision 33  
February 2014
Thank you for your comments. We will coordinate with FDOT to address EPA comments.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

Attached is a pdf file of the letter and comments from EPA, Region 4. Hard copies are being mailed today. Please let me know if you have any question.

Maher Budeir
NEPA Program Office
USEPA, Region 4
404-562-9514
December 30, 2013

Ms. Cathy Kendall, AICP
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Subject: Crosstown Parkway Extension, St. Lucie County, Final Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Federal Aid Project No. 7777-087-A
Financial Project Number: 410844-1-28-1
ETDM # 8247

Dear Ms. Kendall,

Thank you for your interagency coordination efforts on this proposed project. Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA Region 4 has evaluated the consequences of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposal to Extend the Crosstown Parkway form Manth Lane on the west, across the North Fork St. Lucie River to U.S. 1 on the east a distance of approximately 2 miles, in the City of Port St. Lucie, Florida (St. Lucie County).

Alternatives under consideration include No Build Alternative; 2A, Walter Terrance/Midport Road; 2D, Walter Terrance/Midport Road via Floresta Drive; 1F, West Virginia Drive/U.S. 1 North; 6B, south La Bouna Vita/U.S.1; 6A, North La Bouna Vita/Savanna Club Boulevard; and the preferred alternative, 1C, West Virginia Drive/Village green Drive.
The FEIS addresses the majority of the USEPA’s concerns. A few remaining specific comments are enclosed. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FEIS. Please forward one hard copy of the ROD to EPA Region 4 to maintain in our record. If you have questions on the comments or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Maher Budeir at (404) 562-9514 or budeir.maher@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Environmental Accountability

Enclosure 1: Comments on Crosstown parkway Extension FEIS.

cc: Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E., FDOT, District 4
Ron Miedema, USEPA, South Florida Office.
Comments on the FEIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension Project

1.4.2.1.4 Compensatory Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) (pg 1.13 and 1.14) Mitigation costs of 8.2 million for each alternative is misleading. Total wetland functional losses range from 7.37 to 11.00 (Table 1.1) between the six alternatives. Therefore, wetland mitigation costs to offset each of the alternatives should be different. Please explain why mitigation costs are the same when functional losses are different.

3.2.2.2.4.1 Bridge Typical Section (pg 3.27) The DEIS stated one of the sidewalks may be eliminated to further reduce bridge width and shading effects. The USEPA concurred that one sidewalk should be eliminated to reduce environmental impacts. However, the FEIS eliminated this minimization effort due to safety concurs for pedestrians crossing a 6 line highway. The USEPA believes one sidewalk should be eliminated and crossover bridges should be constructed at each end of the bridge to address pedestrian safety. This can help reduce the typical section further by 6 to 8 feet. The substantial length of the bridge will likely justify the addition of the crossover bridges.
Cathy Kendall  
US Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Florida Division Office  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

DHR No.: 2013-5260 (x-ref: 2012-3845)  
Received by DHR: November 27, 2013

Financial Project No.: 410844-1-28-01  
ETDM: 8247

Federal Aid Project No.: 7777-087-01

Project: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS): Crosstown Parkway Extension  
from Manth Lane to US 1

County: St. Lucie

Dear Ms. Kendall:

Our office reviewed the referenced Final Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and implementing regulations 36 C.F.R. Part 800 for possible impacts to historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

This office reviewed the sections of the FEIS addressing cultural resources and it is the opinion of this office that these resources have been adequately addressed.

If you have any questions concerning these comments, please contact Ginny Jones by e-mail at ginny.jones@dov.myflorida.com, or at 850.245.6333 or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert F. Bendus, Director  
Division of Historical Resources  
and State Historic Preservation Officer

PC: Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E., Senior Project Manager, FDOT, D. 4, Ft. Lauderdale  
Ann Broadwell, Cultural Resources Coordinator, FDOT D. 4, Ft. Lauderdale

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES  
R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
Telephone: 850.245.6300 • Facsimile: 850.245.6436 • www.flheritage.com  
Commemorating 500 years of Florida history • www.vivaflorida.org
Thank you for forwarding your comments in support of the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
From: SANDERS, MARVIN E. [mailto:Marty.Sanders@stlucieschools.org]
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 12:48 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Cc: YOST, GENELLE M.; Patricia Roebling; CARTER, DONALD R.
Subject: City of PSL crosstown parkway-FHA

Re: Crosstown Parkway Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement
   Financial Project Number 410844-1-28-01
   Federal Aid Project Number 7777-087 A
   Efficient Transportation Decision Making Number: 8247
   St. Lucie County, Florida

Please see attached correspondence.

Marty E. Sanders, P.E.
Executive Director of Growth Management, Land Acquisition, Inter-Governmental Relations, Facilities & Maintenance
School Board of St. Lucie County
327 NW Commerce Park Drive
Port St. Lucie, FL 34986

(772) 340-7100
(772) 340-7105 direct
(772) 216-5755 cell
December 10, 2013

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E.
Senior project Manager
Florida Department of Transportation
3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Re: Crosstown Parkway Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement
Financial Project Number 410844-1-28-01
Federal Aid Project Number 7777-087 A
Efficient Transportation Decision Making Number: 8247
St. Lucie County, Florida

Dear Ms. Caicedo-Maddison:

On behalf of the St. Lucie County School District, we want to fully support the State and City of Port St. Lucie in moving forward with the project.

Cross-town Parkway Extension will allow more efficient use of our time and resources to transport students to schools in eastern Port St. Lucie. School Board has continued to commit to reduce the time students spend on our school buses. This project will allow for this commitment to be realized. As facilities director that oversees the school transportation we believe that either route 1C provides one of the best alternatives for school transportation and service to our schools. On that basis we support route 1C and the final EIS report.

If you need additional support or recommendations from the St. Lucie County School Board, please call me at (772) 340-7100.

Sincerely,

Marty E. Sanders, P. E.
Executive Director of Growth Management, Land Acquisition, Inter-Governmental Relations, Facilities & Maintenance

cc: Genelle Yost, St. Lucie School Board Superintendent
Patricia Roebling, City of Port St. Lucie City Engineer
Don Carter, St. Lucie School Board Transportation
Attached is the final report as approved by Council on January 17, 2014. No changes were made to the previously sent draft staff report.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stephanie Heidt  
Administrative/ICR Coordinator  
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council  
Partnership Coordinator  
Southeast Florida Regional Partnership  
772.221.4060  
sheidt@tcrpc.org
The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being conducted by the City of Port St. Lucie and the Florida Department of Transportation in association with the Crosstown Parkway Extension Project Development and Environment Study. The Final EIS addresses a project being proposed to extend the existing Crosstown Parkway approximately two miles from Manth Lane on the west, across the North Fork St. Lucie River to U.S. 1. The two existing crossings of the North Fork St. Lucie River, Prima Vista Boulevard and Port St. Lucie Boulevard, are currently operating at a failing level of service. The project is needed to supplement existing capacity that is insufficient to move traffic, people and goods across the river and accommodate the projected future growth of the City’s population over the next twenty-five years.

The City conducted two studies to identify an appropriate corridor and examine various alternatives within that corridor. Following an analysis of the alternatives, the City identified several alternatives that were evaluated further in a Draft EIS, which was released in July 2011. After giving careful consideration to the costs, benefits, and environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives, and after considering comments at public hearings, the City Council adopted a Locally Preferred Alternative on January 23, 2012. The City developed the Final EIS with Alternative 1C as the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative will connect Crosstown Parkway along West Virginia Drive to the existing intersection of U.S. 1 and Village Green Drive. This 1.96-mile project will have a 0.76-mile bridge crossing over the North Fork St. Lucie River and a portion of the Savannas Preserve State Park. The bridge will include six traffic lanes, two bike lanes, and two pedestrian sidewalks.

The Preferred Alternative was selected based on its ability to fulfill the project purpose and need while minimizing environmental impacts, costs, and technical factors. Environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative include:
• relocation of 65 improved residential properties;
• noise impacts at several locations;
• unavoidable direct impact on 6.83 acres of wetlands;
• unavoidable direct impact to 2.96 acres of natural upland communities, including pine flatwoods and live oak;
• unavoidable impact on essential fish habitat, which includes 6.83 acres of palustrine and mangrove habitat and 1.15 acres of open water habitat (primarily shading);
• use of 0.02 acres of the North Fork St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve;
• use of 2.14 acres of the Savannas Preserve State Park; and
• unavoidable impact to Halpatiokee Canoe and Nature Trail, which is the only land-based public access to the portion of the Savannas Preserve State Park west of U.S. 1.

Following selection of the Preferred Alternative, avoidance and minimization measures were developed through coordination with state and federal agencies to reduce the impacts to wetlands, listed species habitats, and essential fish habitat. Efforts to minimize project impacts include:

• reduction of the width of the bridge from 143 feet to 103 feet, which reduced wetland impacts from 10.1 acres to 6.83 acres and upland impacts from 6.45 acres to 2.96 acres;
• use of a top-down bridge construction method to the maximum extent possible, thereby allowing each span to be built from the previous span;
• utilization of temporary platforms or trestles during those periods when top-down construction methodology is not possible;
• bridge design that includes longer spans over open-water portions of the channel with barges as the construction platform to improve navigation;
• elimination of the use of construction haul roads in wetlands areas;
• elimination of the use of water-jetting during pile placement;
• restriction of tree clearing to only those areas where pilings must be placed, and restriction of tree trimming to vegetation above 10 feet that might interfere with trestle profile;
• minimization of ground damage during geotechnical investigations through the use of specialized equipment;
• development of a maintenance of river traffic plan, in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard, to ensure safe navigation of the waterway during construction;
• staging of all construction equipment outside of the state park and
aquatic preserve or in areas that will be incorporated into the roadway approaches; and

- relocation of Halpatiokee canoe dock and nature trail prior to the commencement of construction activities.

The Final EIS also describes several forms of mitigation to provide compensation for unavoidable impacts. Compensatory mitigation for noise impacts will be achieved through the use of noise barriers placed at locations determined during the design phase following additional public input from the community. Similarly, visual impacts will be addressed through the design of lighting, visual features, and project landscaping determined during the design phase following additional public input from the community.

The Final EIS also describes a compensatory mitigation plan for use of the state-owned lands. This resulted in the development of a Proprietary Mitigation Plan, which provides mitigation for obtaining an easement to cross state lands, and a Regulatory Mitigation Plan, which provides mitigation for unavoidable direct and indirect impacts to wetlands, sovereignty submerged lands, and navigable and non-navigable waters, as required under federal and state regulations.

The Proprietary Mitigation Plan includes:

- four water quality improvement projects within the North Fork St. Lucie River floodplain that will restore or improve historic river flows and improve an estimated 22.16 acres of open water, and reconnect an estimated 28.05 acres of degraded floodplain wetlands to the North Fork St. Lucie River;
- conveyance of 108.55 acres of city-owned lands to the State of Florida for inclusion in Savannas Preserve State Park;
- relocation and improvements to the Halpatiokee Canoe and Nature Trail;
- design and construction of the Savannas Recreation Trail; and
- improvements to the Savannas Preserve Education Center.

The Regulatory Mitigation Plan consists of providing two types of wetland mitigation. First, mitigation will be provided in the Platt’s Creek Compensatory Mitigation Site (Platt’s Creek), which is being developed specifically for this project to provide compensatory mitigation for wetland impacts. Second, credits will be purchased at the Bear Point Mitigation Bank to provide mitigation for mangrove impacts.

The 98-acre Platt’s Creek site is owned by St. Lucie County and is a fallow citrus grove. The site is located in the North Fork St. Lucie River drainage basin, which is the same as the Preferred Alternative. After
development, Platt’s Creek will consist of 49.34 acres of restored and created wetlands and 13.65 acres of upland habitat within the fallow citrus grove.

Total wetland functional loss due to the Preferred Alternative is 8.34 functional loss units, including indirect functional loss, and impacts to mangroves. Of the total credits at Platt’s Creek, 11.25 functional gain units will be allocated as compensatory mitigation for regulatory wetland impacts for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Both the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have indicated that this allocation will satisfy the regulatory component for the Preferred Alternative. The remaining functional gain units at the Platt’s Creek site will be reserved for future county projects.

The Preferred Alternative will have unavoidable impacts to 0.19 acres of mangrove habitat, resulting in 0.22 functional loss units. To compensate for this loss, the City will purchase 0.5 credits at the Bear Point Mitigation Bank, which is located in the Indian River Lagoon in St. Lucie County. This location was selected because the freshwater wetland mitigation project at Platt’s Creek will not be able to restore or create mangrove habitat. The South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have indicated that the amount of credits is appropriate mitigation for mangrove losses.

The City of Port St. Lucie has funded the design and right-of-way phases for the Crosstown Parkway Extension Project using a combination of funding sources from the City, St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organization, and Florida Department of Transportation. The construction phase is funded through the City’s sale of bonds, Florida Department of Transportation funding, and federal funding. The total project costs are expected to be $133,499,157.

**Recommendations:**

The proposed project will have a significant impact on many existing homeowners and several sensitive environmental areas, including the North Fork St. Lucie River, Aquatic Preserve, and Savannas Preserve State Park, which are significant regional resources. The Final EIS describes how the city has coordinated with state and federal agencies to identify project-related impacts and develop plans to avoid and minimize impacts to existing developed areas and natural systems where possible. Furthermore, the Final EIS describes several programs to provide mitigation for unavoidable impacts. The proposed wetland-related impacts are allowable under Council’s wetland protection Policy 6.6.1.1, because they meet the terms of the following exception: Such an activity is water dependent or, due to the unique geometry of the site, minimal impact is the unavoidable consequence of development for uses which are appropriate given site characteristics.
The overall plans to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts provide adequate compensation to make the project consistent with the **Strategic Regional Policy Plan**. The project furthers **Strategy 7.1.1**: Develop a balanced, complete and fully integrated transportation system which, at a minimum, includes a road system designed to complement and supplement the core mass transit system and pedestrian and bicycle connections.

The Crosstown Parkway Extension will benefit and promote livability in the region by expanding a limited east-west roadway network, enhancing connectivity of two of Florida’s Strategic Intermodal Systems, creating a multi-purpose linear park facility with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to adjacent residential communities, and accommodating the expansion of the regional transit system. Once complete, the project will provide an additional hurricane and emergency evacuation route and achieve an acceptable level of service.

**Agencies Contacted:**
St. Lucie County
St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organization
Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization
Note: After selection of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1C), coordination continued with NMFS, USFWS and USACE to further reduce impacts associated with the bridge. Through this coordination effort, the bridge typical section for the Preferred Alternative was reduced to approximately 103 feet.
Table 1.2 Project Funding Summary

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Sources: Adopted 2014 – 2018 TPO TIP, Adopted FDOT STIP, and City of Port St. Lucie

For the purpose of this summary table, FDOT refers to the sum of the combined state and federal funding sources.
Appendix B

Public Comments
On FEIS
Hello Ms. Anker,

Thank you for following up on your previous emails. I did receive your emails that included links to the newspaper articles. As I mentioned to you in a separate email response, however, the links allow only subscribers to the newspaper to view any more than just the headline, so I was not able to read the articles. I was able to access and view the YouTube videos highlighting the wildlife seen in the Evan's Creek area. Thank you very much for sending these. I had heard about the YouTube videos but had not seen them previously.

Your emails, which include links to the articles and videos, will be part of the administrative record for the project. I am also copying FDOT so that they will have your comments as well.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Shari Anker [mailto:sranker@mac.com]
Sent: Sunday, December 15, 2013 11:48 AM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Receiving my public comments?

Dear Ms. Kendall,

I have received no confirmation that you have received my two emails that constitute part of the public comment process through to December 30th.

Please acknowledge that you have or have not received my December 11th emails. I sent the emails addressed to you but in lower case. Are the caps in your email address necessary for you to receive emails?

Thank you for your expedited response.

Shari Anker
2402 SE Burton Street
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
Shari Anker: Proposed Crosstown Parkway extension will cripple Port St. Lucie, add to traffic, hurt environment

Will completion of the Crosstown

Shari Anker is a board member of the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County. She created the “Society and Environment” course at Broward College in the 1990s, and wrote “The Life

Sunday, December 8, 2013

The metrics of sustainable cities are far different than those of the past growth-at-at-all-cost policies that have steered too many of Florida’s cities. Sprawling, developer-created Port St. Lucie with dreams of becoming a powerful megalopolis faces a fork in the road as it pushes for completion of the Crosstown Parkway Extension.

Will the city replicate the notorious mistakes made by Broward County with its endless but always congested roads with virtually no real Florida environment remaining? Or, will the city finally come home to the unique place in which it exists and make enlightened decisions to improve the quality of life for its residents and protect its namesake, the magical St. Lucie River?

The city has spent decades and many millions of dollars planning parkway bridge routes through our most environmentally fragile areas: Halpatiokee Trails and marshland of Savannas State Preserve, the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve and the Indian River Lagoon. This relentless pursuit continued despite the environmental community’s advisement legal challenges would result. Stubborn resistance against more prudent alternatives may be a factor in the city’s troubles, including a debt approaching $1 billion.

At an estimated cost of nearly $150 million, with at least $36 million from the city alone, taxpayers are footing the bill for ecological degradation and destruction of portions of two state preserves along the city’s preferred Route 1C bridge to U.S. 1.

And though it may be counterintuitive to some, completing the 1C Route will ultimately result in more, not less, traffic congestion due to spurred growth that occurs after new roads are built.

The city could instead make a choice for the road less traveled. Sustainability oriented cities like Philadelphia are using the new metrics of doing more with less — the “nega strategy” — to refrain from building more expensive infrastructure, such as roads, by devising alternative means to meet the needs of the population. (See Michael Grunwald’s article, “Street Smarts,” in Time, Sept. 30, 2011.)

Port St. Lucie could capitalize on the “port” in its name and encourage its residents to organically create homegrown, thriving civic and small business walkable hubs in three or four sections of the city. Telecommuting, carpooling, improved public transit and expansion of Tri-Rail for long-distance commuters could be prioritized. The city could
better time the bursts of traffic at rush hour. Western residents are now well served by a new hospital and larger shopping venues in Tradition, another step in the right direction to diminish the need for trips across the city. The sinking Prima Vista bridge could be widened when it’s repaired, lessening the need and expense of a new bridge.

The metrics of sustainable ecosystems are that when left intact they provide valuable services like clean air and water, and habitat for critical-to-the-system plant and animal diversity. Viewing an aerial map of the proposed Route 1C reveals a generous swath of protected, well-vegetated land and water that, with no doubt, contributes to the health of not only the river but also the lagoon.

The St. Lucie River Estuary is an epicenter of extraordinary fish diversity, 800-plus species, more than any other place in the nation, in a very small area. This means every acre of wetland, mangrove and submerged vegetation is essential to the sustainability, and resiliency, of our estuarine and riverine ecosystems.

More than 60 at-risk species depend on the aquatic preserve, including 33 birds. This area is a stopover on the Eastern Flyway. Hundreds of species depend on the seven ecosystems of Halpatiokee Trails.

Will the city assume its responsibility to protect its share of this unique and irreplaceable ecosystem? Will it give its namesake the legacy of honor it deserves? If not, it is a loss for all the Treasure Coast, not just the city.
From: Caicedo, Beatriz
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 5:39 PM
To: 'Raymondncar@aol.com'
Cc: 'Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov'
Subject: FW: Crosstown Parkway Bridge Questions

Dear Mr. Treacy,

This is in response to your question regarding the subject project and the new hospital location. The emergency response discussion in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was focused on the impacts to residents and traffic flow within the study area. The traffic study area lies between Port St. Lucie Boulevard to the south, Prima Vista Boulevard to the north, Bayshore Boulevard to the west, and US-1 to the east.

The development of the Martin Health System Tradition Medical Center will be a great benefit to the City of Port St. Lucie when it opens this month, and will provide improved medical services to the City and the expanding population in western Port St. Lucie.

For residents within the study area, the St. Lucie Medical Center is closer than Tradition Medical Center, and will likely remain the primary hospital for emergencies. The benefits reported in the EIS are valid in terms of the analysis being provided.

Sincerely,
Beatriz

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, CPM
Consultant Management
FDOT District Four
3400 West Commercial Blvd.
Ft Lauderdale, Fl 33309-3421
Telephone: 954 777 4336

From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 10:04 AM
To: Raymondncar@aol.com
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov
Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge Questions

Mr. Treacy,

Per your request, I am resending my response (see below) to your 12/12/13 email.

Thank you also, for following up with your phone call this morning. In this discussion, you had asked about when FHWA identified Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative. You will find this answer in the first email that I sent to you on 12/10/13, which reads,
“Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.” You may want to refer back to this email response because it answers many of the questions that you asked about in our conversation.

I hope you will find this information helpful.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Sent: Friday, December 13, 2013 5:27 PM
To: 'Raymondncar@aol.com'
Cc: beatriz.caicedo@dot.state.fl.us; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Cunill, Benito (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge Questions

Mr. Treacy,

This email is in response to your email below, as well as your phone message. I am sorry that I was away from the office when you called.

In your email and phone message, you have asked questions relating to how the project would improve emergency response time given the addition of a new hospital. The paragraph in the EIS that you reference pertains to response time from what is identified as the City’s main hospital – the St. Lucie medical Center, which is located east of the project study area. By copy of this email, I am asking the FDOT project manager to provide any additional information they think would be helpful in addressing your question, and to copy me on the response provided.

You have also requested that I read the EIS and response to your question. I can assure you that I have read the EIS many times, and I am reading every response provided by the agencies and public in regard to the proposed project. Your additional comments will also be included as part of our project record.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
"Port St. Lucie is a city of more than 170,000 people, with the majority living west of the North Fork (of the St. Lucie River)," Martin President and CEO Mark Robitaille told the groundbreaking attendees. "This hospital provides much-needed access." These are the comments made regarding the new hospital in the WESTERN side of Port St. Lucie. I bring this to your attention because in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (section 2.22) last paragraph it is mention "The preferred alternative will improve emergency response time compared to the No Build Alternative". Doesn't a hospital on the western side do a lot more to improve response time?? Why wasn't this new hospital mentioned? I hope before a decision is made to spend millions on this project you will spend time to read the EIS and response to my question. I also hope you can answer these simple questions and not response to this with a standard response. Thank You Ray Treacy
Ms. Joan Bausch  
Conservation Chair  
Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 233  
Stuart, Florida 34995-0233

Dear Ms. Bausch:

Thank you for your October 24, 2013 letter that you sent on behalf of the Florida Native Plant Society to Mr. Victor Mendez, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida. Your letter was forwarded to our office, the FHWA Florida Division, for a response. In your letter, you raised concerns regarding the Little Halpatioke uplands, the North Fork Buffer Preserve and the plants, animals and birds that rely on this habitat.

The Federal-aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the FHWA is working with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

The natural features that you pointed out physically divide the City of Port St. Lucie. These features, as well as the larger North Fork St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve, the developed nature of the land uses east and west of the river with residential areas, parks and schools, and the long-term growth vision of the community, all make for a tremendous challenge in identifying an alternative that has the least overall harm, while still meeting the need and purpose for the project.

From our perspective, the City clearly values the environmental features and ecosystems that exist within their city as demonstrated by their original conveyance of the property to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Throughout the EIS process, the City has worked with FDOT and the resource agencies to try and come up with methods to avoid, minimize and mitigate for natural resource impacts that will result from the project, while still meeting the needs of the people living in the community and not causing an overall harm to the very residents for whom the project is intended to provide benefit.

You are right about the species that seem to make themselves known, as if on cue, for field reviews of the project area. During one of our field reviews, we also saw a gopher tortoise emerge
and then begin walking along one of the roadways that make up one of the more southern alternatives. Seeing the flora and fauna that is evident on each of the proposed alternatives, one can appreciate the ecological value of the area that you speak to in your letter, and to which we, FDOT and the City have been working with the resource agencies to develop protection strategies.

During our field reviews, staff was also able to take the technical studies developed for the EIS and see how specific residences would be affected by the various alternatives, either through acquisition, noise impacts, being divided from the rest of their neighborhood by the road corridor, having their street cut off into a cul-de-sac or having their child’s school front a major transportation corridor. These safety and livability issues are also important to consider in evaluating the alternatives in order to select one that has the least overall harm.

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

As stated previously, all of the build alternatives will have significant impacts, whether those impacts are to natural resources, the human environment or both. It therefore makes it particularly important to make sure that the alternative selected in the FHWA Record of Decision is one that achieves its original purpose to address the severe traffic congestion in the City, particularly improving system performance on the two existing bridges in the area and providing additional traffic capacity to meet the projected growth and travel demand.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and is working with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS). Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project. By copy of this letter, we are providing your concerns to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please contact Ms. Cathy Kendall, Environmental Specialist, with our office at cathy.kendall@dot.gov. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Sincerely,

James Christian, P.E.
Division Administrator

FOR:

cc: Beatriz Caicedo, FDOT District 4 w/attachment
Marjorie Bixby, FDOT CEMO w/attachment
Michael Lamprecht, FHWA HEPE-20
October, 24, 2013
Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Proposed Route 1C of the Crosstown Bridge, Port St Lucia, FL

The Board of Directors of the Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society wishes to reiterate its support for preserving the Little Halpatioke uplands and the North Fork Buffer Preserve that lie in the projected path of Port St Lucia’s Crosstown Parkway.

This property is an ecological gem that the town/city should strive to protect as a place that its citizens and visitors can come to learn about Florida’s natural areas. Within its bounds there are seven different ecosystems, each with particular unique communities of plants and animals.

Our original comments about this proposed crossing was in a 1999 letter to Secretary David Struhs (attached). The more recent process to get stakeholders to support a particular route, did not reach out to those of us in Martin County who have, in the past, raised questions and concerns.

While the options to send the road to the north or south of this conservation land seem to be fraught with problems, going through this pristine habitat is also extremely problematic. There are listed species of both plants and animals that will be impacted. (either wiped out or shaded or dumped on by garbage from the bridge). Splitting this large continuous stretch of conservation land will diminish its conservation value by more than the built footprint of the bridge and its right of way. The noise and light pollution will reach hundreds of yards up and down the river. The bridge itself will undoubtedly become a deterrence to the movements of many species that have the requirement for large habitat ranges.

Some of the listed species associated with this particular gem were on view during a recent visit. A gopher turtle (happily munching grasses in the parking lot), Conarida grandiflora (large flowered rosemary), Rose pagonia, Nodding pinweed and the Cardinal air plant all call this region home.

Also please consider that these few acres are part of an important resting spot for migrating birds as they head to, or come back from, their wintering places in South or Central America. The Eastern flyway goes right through our area.

Please consider carefully what the plan for this structure will do to the innocent creatures that rely on these bio-rich habitats. We owe it to future generations to consider carefully what conservation means.

Sincerely,

Joan Bausch, Conservation Chair, Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

cc: Robert Hartsell, Esq.
June 17, 1999

To: David B. Struhs, Secretary
3900 Commonwealth Blvd M.S.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Re: Bridge right-of-way over Halpatiokee, North Fork Buffer Preserve

The Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society recently had a most pleasant tour of the aquatic buffer preserve along the North Fork of the St Lucie River, known as Halpatiokee. [on US Hwy #1 at Village green Drive, PSL] Many thanks to Jeff Beal for his time and expertise.

We have learned that Port St Lucie has applied to the DEP for a bridge "right of way" directly over this beautifully pristine and widely diverse habitat. These few acres alone yield seven separate ecological habitats. Of the 125 plant species identified, 19 are endangered, threatened or a species of special concern. Among the 101 animal species noted so far, 16 are on those lists.

PLEASE DON'T DESTROY THIS SPECIAL PLACE!

We understand that Port St Lucie needs to relieve traffic problems, we believe this is the wrong path. We respectfully request that DEP steer PSL to consider alternate sites, already impacted, to the north.

We are highly concerned, as well, that precedents would be set allowing the degradation of lands purchased through environmental land acquisition programs (CARL, specifically).

Another issue, but related, would be the hope of some PSL people to construct a bridge over the Indian River Lagoon, crossing state preserve lands known as the Savannas. Both the savannas and the sea grasses of the Indian River Lagoon are special, as you may be aware.

We strongly object to the impact that these projects would bring to these native plant habitats.

Sincerely,

Joan Bausch
for the Board of Directors, Martin County Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society

cc: Larry Nall, DEP Div. Marine Resources, 3900 Commonwealth Blvd MS 10,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000;
Jeff Beal, Southeast District Branch Office, 1801 SE Hillmoor Drive, Suite C204, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Post Office Box 801, Jensen Beach, Florida 34958-0801
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<tr>
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<td>Redtop panicum</td>
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### Dicots

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<td>Vitis shuttleworthii</td>
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</table>
J. Bausch
McFPNS
PO Box 233
Stuart, FL 33495-0233

Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Dear Ms. Kendall,

The natural beauty of our Florida Savannas State Park must be preserved.

I am opposed to the construction of the Crosstown Bridge through the Halpatiokee Preserve State Park, a part of the Savannas State Park.

There are other bridge location options to consider that will not impact this pristine and environmentally sensitive area as Port St. Lucie endeavors to connect to their beaches.

Julie K. Bjornson, DC, FACFN
5816 SE Riverboat Drive
Stuart, FL 34997
772-485-8558 mobile
neurosecretary@live.com
From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2013 11:55 AM
To: ablacka@gmail.com
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Benito.Cunill@dot.gov; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge

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Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
To: Ms Kendall, Federal Highway Administration

I am against using route 1C to complete the Crosstown Parkway. I strongly object to placing a bridge footing in a park purchased with public tax dollars to preserve a fragile ecosystem.

There are five other routes available for completion of the Crosstown Parkway, all of them less damaging to the ecosystem contained in Halpatiokee Park.

Mitigation property remote from the area concerned in no way compensates for the loss of this ecosystem or for the potential detrimental effects on the health of the St. Lucie River.

I am requesting that you please choose another area and do not build the bridge through Halpatiokee Park.

Adella Blacka
Concerned Resident of Port St Lucie.
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Your comments will be included as part of our project records.

Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: William Brightfelt  
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 5:42 PM  
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA); sranker@me.com  
Subject: Fwd: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, Port St. Lucie, Fl.

-----Original Message-----
From: William Brightfelt  
To: cathykendall <cathykendall@dot.gov>
Sent: Thu, Jan 2, 2014 5:32 pm  
Subject: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, Port St. Lucie, Fl.

I am a property owner in the neighborhood of the proposed bridge, and have lived here for over 14 years. The City has been talking about putting that bridge in that SPECIFIC location for the entire time, because they own the land there and bought-up many of the nearby homes along SW Virginia Dr. I don't think they ever seriously considered putting it anywhere else!

I agree with everything Shari Anker has told you, and feel that the bridge should NOT be built at the proposed location.

Sincerely,  William Brightfelt (1237  
SE Coral Reef Street, PSL)
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA's assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

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Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
-----Original Message-----
From: Tris [mailto:fishthemango@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2013 2:27 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Bridges

Please add my name to the petition to stop construction of proposed bridge over sensitive environmental marshlands and wetlands.
Thanks,

Tris Colket
267 Marina Dr
Ft Pierce, FL. 34949
Cell : 772-559-0594

Sent from my iPhone
Mr. Copeland,

Thank you again for your comments.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL  32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Henry Copeland [mailto:copeland29@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 26, 2013 6:57 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Please SAY NO to bridge through legally protected and environmentally precious Halpatiokee Park

Dear Ms. Kendall,
I sent you this e-mail letter earlier today and mistakenly and erroneously addressed the salutation to a local person who I know to be actively involved in opposing the Crosstown Bridge. I apologize for this mistake, as I intended you to be the recipient, I do not think it is appropriate (or legal) to displace Halpatiokee Park for purposes of constructing this bridge, and I ask that you look to other possible locations.
Thank you. Henry Copeland

Email sent earlier to you:

12-26-13 (revised)

Dear Ms. Kendall:

I am aware that some planners, locals and state staff would like to see greater roadway connectivity in Port St. Lucie, and they hope to construct a bridge that will essentially forever damage Halpatiokee Park and limit/reroute access to the public as a direct consequence of its construction. Please know that many, including myself, object strongly to this location and the partial destruction of such a unique and precious environmental preserve.

As a Florida attorney, I have serious doubts that other prospective bridge routes and sites aren't "feasible and prudent" alternatives, as required by Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc.
v. Volpe (US 1971) before building on the Halpatiokee site can be justified legally.

Accordingly, I am vehemently opposed to the construction of the Crosstown Bridge and the destruction of a precious part of the Savannas, the Halpatiokee Park.

Please direct staff to properly re-review alternative routes and locations for feasibility.

I'm hoping our state and local planners will change their errant plans and do the right thing in the spirit of this holiday season and the greater public interest in environmental preservation.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Henry Copeland
1479 NE 23rd Terrace
Jensen Beach, FL 34957
copeland29@bellsouth.net
772-225-7840

From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov  [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2013 12:00 PM
To: copeland29@bellsouth.net
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov
Subject: RE: Please SAY NO to bridge through legally protected and environmentally precious Halpatiokee Park

Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS
(DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

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Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Henry Copeland [mailto:copeland29@bellsouth.net]  
Sent: Thursday, December 26, 2013 11:51 AM  
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)  
Subject: Please SAY NO to bridge through legally protected and environmentally precious Halpatiokee Park

12-26-13

Dear Ms. Anker:

I am aware that some planners, locals and state staff would like to see greater roadway connectivity in Port St. Lucie, and they hope to construct a bridge that will essentially forever damage Halpatiokee Park and limit/reroute access to the public as a direct consequence of its construction. Please know that many, including myself, object strongly to this location and the partial destruction of such a unique and precious environmental preserve.

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Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
Dear Ms. Kendall,

I and my wife join in protesting the destruction of the Halpatiokee Trails section of the Savannas as well as the part of the North Fork of the Saint Lucie River Aquatic Preserve. We don't need another bridge and this land was paid for with taxes and set aside for conservation.

We cannot continue to destroy Florida's natural resources. Stop the bridge construction now! Thanks

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: dyanaboydvoss@gmail.com
Date: Sun, Dec 8, 2013 at 1:50 PM
Subject: It's not OK. And your favorite State Preserve could be next.
To: Dyana Boyd Voss <conservationallianceslc@gmail.com>

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO PEOPLE IN YOUR CONTACT LIST. ANY HOPE TO SAVE STATE PARKS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS.
PLEASE ACT NOW.
AN OPEN LETTER FROM SHARI ANKER

We at the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County are urging you to contact Cathy Kendall today at Florida's DOT to tell her it's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge. Two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation.
December 30th is the last day for the public to submit comments. Your timing is critical.
Her email address is: cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Here's the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:
* The destruction of Halpatiooke Trails section of Savannas State Preserve
* Degradation of the **North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve**
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.
* Air, water, and noise pollution in a pristine and serene area

We're hoping that as the environmental community rallied around stopping golf courses and resorts in our State Preserve, we can stop bridges through them as well.

Please like our Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/ConservationAllianceofStLucieCo

Twitter address: https://twitter.com/ConservationSLC

Linked In address: Conservation Alliance of SLC

We are deeply grateful to all who take a moment out of busy schedules to submit comments. Have a joyous holiday season.

POST FROM CAPT. DON VOSS, MARINE CLEANUP INITIATIVE

The smile (as seen in the above photo) off the north fork of the St Lucie River in the center is Evans Creek off US 1 in Port St Lucie. To the left side is Port St Lucie Blvd Bridge and to the right side is the Prima Vista Bridge... about two miles apart. The Tradition's Community (West of the housing to the top of the photo) wants another bridge right through the center of the smile of Evans Creek. Evans creek and the small amount of trees visible is the only portion of the Halpatiokee Wetlands Preserve left in the city of Port St Lucie as the rest has been built over. Every house seen above the river used to be land that filtered the storm water before it ran into the North Fork. So, when people clamor about "Save Our Rivers" and "Stop the discharges" they need to understand...every time Port St Lucie and St Lucie County allows another blacktop surface or building, they have polluted the river even more. Discharges that started in May 2013 did not affect the estuary until July 2013 because of all the storm water coming from the canals and the St Lucie River's overtaxed the flow. The additional water directed into the North Fork through another bridge will further blow up this problem. Don't the bridges pictured seem to be sufficient?
Regards,
Billy L. Gibson, Operations Manager
772.380.6815
Mr. R. Grant Gilmore, Jr., Ph.D.
Senior Scientist
Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Science, Inc.
5920 First St. SW
Vero Beach, Florida 32968

Dear Mr. Gilmore:

Thank you for your October 28, 2013 letter that you sent to Mr. Victor Mendez, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Your letter was forwarded to our office, the FHWA Florida Division, for a response. In your letter, you indicate that the proposed project area is a vital refuge to numerous aquatic species that are currently in distress from other sources, that there may be irreversible impacts from the construction of a 6-lane bridge project, that other options should be considered that would have far fewer impacts and that if the project is constructed, it should be located in an area that is already impacted and degraded by human construction.

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If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please contact Ms. Cathy Kendall, Environmental Specialist, with our office at cathy.kendall@dot.gov. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

FOR: James Christian, P.E.
Division Administrator

cc: Beatriz Caicedo, FDOT District 4 w/ attachment
    Marjorie Bixby, FDOT CEMO w/ attachment
    Michael Lamprecht, FHWA HEPE-20
October 28, 2013

Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge proposed by Port St. Lucie, Florida

Dear Mr. Mendez:

This letter is to put into the FHWA's record my profound concern for the ecological impacts that will occur if the City of Port St. Lucie's proposed construction of the Crosstown Parkway Extension (CTPE) Bridge, Route 1C, is permitted by the FHWA. My focus here will be on the aquatic impacts to that section of Evans Creek and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve. Prior to that discussion I will relate my comments to the larger aquatic ecosystem to which this section belongs and include contemporaneous events. Both should be given full consideration before any affirmative decision is granted.

I am currently the Senior Scientist with Estuarine, Coastal, and Ocean Science, Inc., an organization that I founded in Vero Beach, Florida. My Ph.D. in biology is from the Florida Institute of Technology. For thirty-two years I worked with Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Fort Pierce, Florida, and with the Dynamac Corporation at the Kennedy Space Center. I have over 43 years research experience in studying a variety of fish communities and ecologies throughout Florida and the Caribbean Sea. I have published over 70 technical and 30 popular papers on fish ecology. This work includes a comprehensive regional fish species list for the 1995 Indian River Lagoon Biodiversity Conference for the Bulletin Of Marine Science publication demonstrating that this Lagoon contains the most diverse fish fauna in U.S. waters. (The list is now found at the Fort Pierce Smithsonian Marine Specie Center's website.) I have appeared on programs for the Discovery Channel, and was part of the first American research expedition into Cuban waters since the revolution for a Discovery Channel documentary.
1. The Larger Aquatic Ecosystem

I write this letter today because I have devoted a great deal of my life to studying the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and its largest tributary, the St. Lucie River Estuary (SLRE). I cannot emphasize too strongly how unique and extraordinary this aquatic area is, in comparison to other aquatic areas in Florida, and the United States. The unique indigenous aquatic fauna and high biodiversity of this particular location has made me an advocate for its conservation.

The epicenter of our country’s aquatic biodiversity is the St. Lucie River Estuary. Due to the interplay of unique coral reefs, extensive submerged Anastasia rock formations and the proximity of the Continental shelf and tropical ocean currents in the near shore, and the convergence of ecozones in salinity and water temperature as well as ecological characteristics associated with prevailing winds, sea grass species diversity, tropical macro-algal flora, and mangrove forest wetlands the St. Lucie River Estuary, its watershed, the Indian River Lagoon, and adjacent continental shelf, can boast 800 fish species, nearly 2/3 of Florida’s 1300 fish species.

Key to understanding my discussion below is that this setting supports maximum diversity in a relatively small area. Therefore, any anthropogenic changes, however small, will have a magnified impact.

2. Contemporaneous Events

We are now at risk of losing a national treasure, this unique estuary and the biodiversity it supports. It is well-documented that when Lake Okeechobee waters, and other tributaries discharge their load of nitrogen, phosphorous, heavy metals etc. into the SLRE, that toxic cyanobacteria, toxic dinoflagellates and fungal growth cause fish disease and reduce fish diversity. These discharges have a more catastrophic impact on this estuary than they would have on any other estuary in the U.S. Combining this year’s prolonged and substantial discharges from Lake Okeechobee, with the sudden disappearance of the majority of sea grass (a keystone species) in much of the IRL, this very special area is under enormous stress. (At other locations within the IRL unprecedented increased mortality rates are occurring in indigenous marine mammals: manatees and bottle-nosed dolphin; and marine birds: pelicans) This aquatic system is presently at risk of collapse unless prompt corrective action is taken.

A public outcry over these diseased and declining ecosystems, the SLRE and IRL has resulted in national media coverage. Local press covers the issue daily. Fishing, environmental and civic interests are examining the option of legal action. A Congressional Briefing, initiated by U.S. Representative Patrick Murphy, on the state
of our local waters was recently held in Washington, DC, on October 3\textsuperscript{rd}. On September 9\textsuperscript{th}, I presented my scientific analysis of the problem to a six-County Commissioner task force. The Martin and St. Lucie County Commissions are asking Florida’s governor to declare a state of emergency for our waterways. Rep. Murphy, along with U.S. Reps. Troy Radel and Steny Hoyer, and Florida’s governor, Rick Scott, have requested President Obama to tour the area.

3. The CTPE Bridge and the NFSLR-AP and Evans Creek

\emph{Situated} just a few miles north and upstream of the St. Lucie River Estuary, within this center of Florida’s fish diversity, is the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve (NFSLR-AP), and its tributary, Evans Creek, in which the CTPE Bridge is proposed. This is a high value area precisely because of the extensive area of intact and undisturbed native vegetation, and because it is some distance upstream from the Lake Okeechobee discharges and some distance downstream from storm water treatment discharges, effectively providing opportunity for cleaner water. Evans Creek, a 7-mile long oxbow of the NFSLR, is a narrow, shallow, and thoroughly vegetated channel that provides valuable protective fish habitat. For these reasons this particular portion of the SLRE is extremely valuable in providing nursery habitat and organism refugia in an ecosystem that is under considerable stress at this time.

I recommend any environmental impact statement for the Bridge must include the stressed larger aquatic system in which the NFSLR-AP and Evans Creek are located. It must take into account the likely probability that this aquatic area is a vital refuge for numerous species during ecological crisis.

I am also a strong proponent of mapping species distributions and their critical micro-habitats. The key indicator on how to protect fish comes from observation of fish behavior and micro-habitat preferences in the wild. I recommend that species micro-habitat mapping of this area be performed both during the present water crisis and after the discharges have abated. These data should be included in any EIS.

Two research observations help clarify my recommendations. Fish such as snook and tarpon seek out very specific protected and abundantly vegetated micro-habitats within wetlands during their critical early developmental stages. My quantitative observations made over several decades demonstrated that these preferred nursery areas are not ubiquitous, and can be some distance apart. In Jack Island Preserve State Park, alongside the IRL in St. Lucie County, during a 3-hour set period, over 1,500 juvenile common snook were caught in a trap set in a mangrove forest tributary. Other adjacent mangrove tributary sites sampled with the same techniques at the same time did not produce juvenile snook. The common snook is
a valuable recreational fishery species under considerable legal management in south Florida and is another protected species documented in the NFSLR-AP. Tarpon, another valuable sport fishery species, were observed to prefer isolated ponds and upstream habitats. Adult and larval tarpon have been routinely captured migrating up the north fork of the St. Lucie River. We have documented tarpon abandoning critical habitats when they are modified or disturbed by dredging and construction activities. We are instructed here that once disturbed tarpon did not return to their previously favored site.

These documented observations demonstrate that possibly irreversible impacts could occur due to the construction of a large 6-lane bridge in these critical fish habitats in the St. Lucie River and Evans Creek.

Another listed species, and a species of special concern according to NOAA, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Opossum pipefish (*Microphis brachyurus lineatus*), has been documented in the NFSLR-AP. The only demonstrated and predictable breeding habitat for this species in the United States are the freshwater tributaries to the southern Indian River Lagoon, the St. Sebastian, St. Lucie and Loxahatchee rivers. It is a species I have had extensive experience with, and have highlighted it in several publications, including my chapter, in C. R. Gilbert, ed. *Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida, Vol. II Fishes* (1992). The pipefish travel far upstream in the St. Lucie River. The very same threats to the SLRE and the IRL threaten the very small numbers of remaining opossum pipefish, along with habitat destruction.

Breeding pairs of opossum pipefish require specific *Panicum* spp and *Polygonum* spp. of vegetation, a microhabitat that emerges sporadically in patches and clumps underwater. This grass species is especially vulnerable to herbicides and other anthropogenic impacts. (A preliminary plant species survey of the abutting Haipatiokee Trails section of the Savannas State Preserve Park lists three *Panicum* species. This diverse terrestrial complement to this aquatic area is also at risk of irreversible negative impacts caused by the bridge’s construction.) Dense vegetation is also required for the crustacean and small prey fish of their diet. The bridge’s construction, shading, and indirect run-off will either destroy or degrade the vegetation on which the pipefish depend for survival.

Because the pipefish are poor swimmers, protected enclaves like that found in Evans Creek would insure a protected haven from the increased water discharges from Lake Okeechobee from the south, and storm water discharges from the north. As I have stated elsewhere, the remaining natural portions of creeks and streams the pipefish need to survive, and their unique sympatric tropical associates, and the various gobies listed below should be preserved in the NFSLR-AP.
Besides the opossum pipefish, other members of this unique group of tropical peripheral fishes are also documented inhabitants of the NFSLR-AP, and they, too, are considered rare and/or threatened. They are: Bigmouth sleeper (Gobiomorus dormitor); the Slashcheek goby (Gobionellus pseudofasciatus); and the River goby (Awaous banana); whitemouth croaker, (Micropogonias furnieri); mountain mullet, (Agonostomus monticolae); burro grunt, (Pomadasys crocro); swordspine snook, (Centropomus ensiferus); largescale fat snook, (C. mexicanus). Within the United States, these species are only known to reproduce and have predictable resident populations in the St. Lucie River and its tributaries. It is highly likely that the present degradation of the St. Lucie River has placed these species in a more tenable condition for survival.

As I briefly explained above, absolutely essential to fish ecology is native vegetation, whether it be submerged vegetation like sea grass or the Panicum or Polygonum species, or mangroves along the banks, or inshore wetlands. Because so much biodiversity comes from a small aquatic area in the STLRE, every acre counts. When compared to wetland and seagrass acreage in other Florida estuaries, the IRL and STLRE have very little available fish habitat. For example, ninety-six percent of the tropical mangrove forest habitat is on the west coast of Florida, while the other four percent are in the IRL and its tributaries, like the St. Lucie River. (As its name suggests, the Mangrove rivulus (Rivulus marmoratus), a species of special concern that is a documented inhabitant of NFSLR-AP, requires mangrove habitat.) Every acre of inshore wetlands is precious because they support our near ocean, estuarine and riverine fisheries. Larvae and juveniles of our valuable offshore grouper and snapper bottom fisheries also depend on healthy Lagoon wetland and seagrass habitat to complete their life cycle.

Due to local urban and suburban growth, accompanied with seawalls, dredge and fill operations, wetland drainage or impounding, herbicide and fertilizer applications we are losing the very vegetative structure that insures the survival of this extraordinary fish diversity. This aquatic area can ill-afford additional loss and alteration of aquatic habitat, submerged vegetation, mangroves, and wetlands that will occur with the construction of a bridge though one of the healthiest, largest and least disturbed area of the Florida Aquatic Preserve, Evans Creek, and the wetlands of the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve.

The NFSLR-AP was created to conserve and protect essential habitat for native flora and fauna in perpetuity. I urge continued protection of this ecologically vital area, and ask the City, State, and Federal governments and agencies to pursue other options with far less ecological impact. If a bridge is to be built preference should be given to those areas already impacted and degraded by human construction. In my
opinion, Route 1C is the most deleterious and harmful selection relative to aquatic impacts and impacts on a unique, indigenous and localized fauna.

Water connects all uplands with tributaries and estuaries. All coastal zone activities are interconnected through water. What we do to one part of our watershed ends up affecting other parts. That is why exceptional due diligence must be performed well in advance of any bridge construction, because it will, with no doubt, affect the aquatic health of the aquatic ecosystems surrounding the bridge and downstream.

If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours,

R. Grant Gilmore, Jr., Ph.D.
Senior Scientist
Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Science, Inc.
5920 First St. SW
Vero Beach, FL 32968
772-562-5611

Attachment: “R.G. Gilmore Publications & Reports on Rare, Endangered and Threatened Fish Species of the Indian River Lagoon”

cc: via email
Robert Hartsell, Esq.
Robert@Hartsell-Law.com
Washington, D.C. 20590
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Federal Triangle, Federal Triangle
Federal Triangle, Federal Triangle, Federal Triangle, Federal Triangle
Victor M. Mendez

Exumani, Coastal and Ocean Science, Inc.
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Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
From: Diane Goldberg [mailto:digoldberg@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 05, 2013 11:15 AM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA); patr@cityofpsl.com
Subject: Crosstown Pkwy

My husband & I are against using route C1 to complete the Crosstown Pkwy. We feel it is offense to use our park to complete this route. You have FIVE other choices that would work without hurting our fragile environment. You can NOT make up for the lost ecosystems by providing a man-made facility instead.

We also object to the additional costs that will bring us close, if not over the billion dollar mark in City debt. We want to see the debt deceased before you add any additional costs we can't pay for. This might increase our taxes at a time when too many of our citizens have not recovered from the last seven years of City & personal problems.

Diane & Benjamin Goldberg
6470 NW Volucia Drive
Port St Lucie, Fl 34986
digoldberg@bellsouth.net
772 343-8666
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Enough is enough. There is so much concrete in this area that the runoff is killing everything in its journey to the ocean. Is it really smart to take away any green that's left.

It's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge. Two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation.

Here's the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:
* The destruction of Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve
* Degradation of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.
* Air, water, and noise pollution in a pristine and serene area

We're hoping that as the environmental community rallied around stopping golf courses and resorts in our State Preserve, we can stop bridges through them as well.
Mr. Robert N. Hartsell, P.A.
Federal Tower Building
1600 S. Federal Highway, Suite 921
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33062

Dear Mr. Hartsell:

Thank you for your November 12, 2013 letter that you sent to Mr. Victor Mendez, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and David Hawk, Acting Division Administrator of the FHWA-FL Division, regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port St. Lucie, Florida. In your letter, you request that FHWA deny federal funding for the project and include your letter with attachments as part of the administrative record. The attachments include letters from Mr. R. Grant Gilmore, Jr., Ph.D., Mr. Charles Lee, Mr. Jason Totiou, Ms. Camille S. Yates, two letters from Ms. Joan Boasch and a letter from Captain Donald Voss.

The Federal-aid Program is a federally assisted, state-administered program. As such, FHWA has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear firsthand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this letter, we are providing your concerns to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.
If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please contact Ms. Cathy Kendall, Environmental Specialist, with our office at cathy.kendall@dot.gov. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Sincerely,

FOR: James Christian, P.E.
Division Administrator

cc: Beatriz Caicedo, FDOT District 4 w/ attachment
Marjorie Bixby, FDOT CEMO w/ attachment
Michael Lamprecht, FHWA HEPE-20
November 12, 2013

VIA U.S. MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

David C. Hawk
Acting Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge proposed by the City Port St. Lucie, Florida

Dear Sirs,

By way of introduction, my name is Robert Hartsell and I represent the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County; the Indian Riverkeeper; Florida Wildlife Federation; St. Lucie Audubon; St. Lucie Chapter – Florida Native Plant Society; Martin County Chapter – Florida Native Plant Society; Martin County Conservation Alliance; Florida Audubon and the Sierra Club, Loxahatchee Group in a legal capacity regarding concerns over the Route 1C alternative of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge proposed and favored by the City of Port St. Lucie (“City”), Florida. It is our understanding that the Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) is undertaking the preparation of final Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) and record of decision (“ROD”) for the federal funding assistance for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Specifically, my clients ask that you deny any funding that would assist the City in the development of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge project through two state parks and an aquatic preserve when more reasonable alternatives exist.

Please include this letter and its attachments in the administrative record of the above referenced final EIS and the ROD. It is our opinion that the attachments provide local expertise
and on the ground knowledge of the adverse environmental impacts that Route 1C will have on the area.

**EISs Prepared Under NEPA Provide a Critical Review of Proposed Actions**

The National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") is America's "basic national charter for protection of the environment." NEPA ensures that federal agencies "will have available, and will carefully consider, detailed information concerning significant environmental impacts" and that such information "will be made available to the larger [public] audience."

The policy of NEPA as expressed in the preamble to the statute makes the commitment to the protection of the environment the overriding concern, saying:

The purposes of this chapter are: To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man ....

President Nixon, himself, emphasized protection of the environment in his Executive Order 11514 of March 5, 1970. He said:

The Federal Government shall provide leadership in protecting and enhancing the quality of the Nation's environment to sustain and enrich human life. Federal agencies shall initiate measures needed to direct their policies, plans and programs so as to meet national environmental goals.

To this end, NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare a detailed EIS for any "major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." NEPA requires the federal agency to "consider every significant aspect of the environmental impact of a proposed action," and to ensure "that the agency will inform the public that it has indeed considered environmental concerns in its decision making process." The Eleventh Circuit has explained that:

The court will overturn an agency's decision as arbitrary and capricious under [NEPA] "hard look" review if it suffers from one of the following: (1) the decision does not rely on the factors that Congress intended the agency to consider; (2) the agency failed entirely to consider an important aspect of the problem; (3) the agency offers an explanation which

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1 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(a).
runs counter to the evidence; or (4) the decision is so implausible that it cannot be the result of differing viewpoints or the result of agency expertise.\(^7\)

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals specified that an agency's failure to "adequately consider all relevant environmental factors" during the NEPA process is arbitrary and capricious.\(^8\) This particular case involved the Army Corps of Engineers' approval of a reservoir. The Court held that the agency's action was arbitrary and capricious because the Corps "did not identify the environmental concerns related to the pipeline remaining underneath the proposed reservoir, [and] did not take a "hard look" at the potential adverse consequences of such a pipeline."\(^9\)

The attached letters present the opinions of local and national experts in the environmental field and they share their respective concerns over the proposed Route 1C. Exhibits A-F. We believe that these documents are essential for the record of decision regarding the denial or approval of funding for proposed Route 1C. These expert letters detail the comprehensive adverse impacts on the larger aquatic system of the St. Lucie Estuary, listed animal species, listed plant species, seagrasses, wetland and upland habitat, water quality, and critical state park resources (which Section 4F of the Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. Section 303 and 23 U.S.C. Section 138 prohibits in this scenario).

Therefore, given the magnitude of the proposed Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge proposed by the City, the sensitivity and significance of these natural resources in this area and the ongoing ecological collapse of the Indian River Lagoon and the potential cumulative impacts from this project, the selection of an alternative route is appropriate for the protection of these areas. It is within the FHWA's and the people of St. Lucie County's best interest to consider all relevant factors, including all 'environmental factors' or key 'aspects of the problem' in its EIS review. EISs prepared that exclude significant impacts are insufficient to truly evaluate the effects of Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge on the environment.

**Conclusion**

"NEPA emphasizes the importance of coherent and comprehensive up-front environmental analysis to ensure informed decision making to the end that the agency will not act on incomplete information, only to regret its decision after it is too late to correct." As the Court in Kern v. United States Bureau of Land Mgmt.\(^11\) articulated, "NEPA is not designed to postpone analysis of an environmental consequence to the last possible moment. Rather it is designed to require such analysis as soon as it can reasonably be done."\(^12\) Clearly, the time is now. For all the above-stated reasons, we request that you review these attached documents and deny the funding for the proposed Route 1C.

Please make these comments and the attached documents part of the official record for these projects. Also, please send a copy of all future notices, announcements of final EISs, decision notices and announcements, and correspondence for these projects to me at the above

\(^7\) Sierra Club v Corps, 295 F.3d at 1216 (emphasis added).

\(^8\) Hill v. Boy, 144 F.3d 1446, 1451 (11th Cir. 1998) (emphasis added).

\(^9\) Id.


\(^11\) 284 F.3d 1062, 1072 (9th Cir. 2002).

\(^12\) 284 F. 3d at 1072.
address. Thank you for the opportunity and the opportunity for the experts to comment on this EIS. Please feel free to contact the primary authors of our collective comments, or Robert Hartsell at (954) 778-1052, if you have any questions about our letter.

Respectfully submitted on this 12th day of November, 2013,

[Signature]

Robert N. Hartsell, Esq.
Robert N. Hartsell, P.A.
Federal Tower Building
1600 N. Federal Hwy, Suite 921
Pompano Beach, Florida 33062

CC: Colonel Allen M. Dodd, United States Army Corps of Engineers District Commander
P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019;

Darayl Tompkins, Commander (dpb), U.S. Coast Guard, Bridge Branch Federal Permitting
Agent, 909 SE 1st Ave. Ste. 432, Miami, Florida 33131-3028;

Larry Williams, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1339 20th Street, Vero Beach,
Florida 32960-3559;

Cathy Kendall, Environmental Specialist, FDOT District 4, 3400 West Commercial Boulevard,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309;

Beatriz Caicedo, FDOT project manager, FDOT District 4, 3400 West Commercial Boulevard,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309;

Secretary Hershel T. Vineyard, Jr., Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 3900
Commonwealth Boulevard M.S. 49, Tallahassee, Florida 32399;

Blake C. Guillory, P.E., Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District, 3301
Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406;

Nick Wiley, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Farris Bryant Building,
620 S. Meridian St., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600;

Chairman Tod Mowery, Chairman, St. Lucie Board of County Commissioners, 2300 Virginia
Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida 34982.
JoAnn M. Faiella, Mayor, City of Port St. Lucie, City Hall, 121 S.W. Port St. Lucie Blvd., Port St. Lucie, Florida 34984-5099;

-and-

Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County
Indian Riverkeeper
Florida Wildlife Federation
St. Lucie Audubon
St. Lucie Chapter – Florida Native Plant Society
Martin County Chapter – Florida Native Plant Society
Sierra Club of St. Lucie County
Audubon of Florida
Martin County Conservation Alliance
EXHIBIT A
October 28, 2013

Victor M. Mendez  
Federal Highway Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge proposed by Port St. Lucie, Florida

Dear Mr. Mendez:

This letter is to put into the FHWA’s record my profound concern for the ecological impacts that will occur if the City of Port St. Lucie’s proposed construction of the Crosstown Parkway Extension (CTPE) Bridge, Route 1C, is permitted by the FHWA. My focus here will be on the aquatic impacts to that section of Evans Creek and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve. Prior to that discussion I will relate my comments to the larger aquatic ecosystem to which this section belongs and include contemporaneous events. Both should be given full consideration before any affirmative decision is granted.

I am currently the Senior Scientist with Estuarine, Coastal, and Ocean Science, Inc., an organization that I founded in Vero Beach, Florida. My Ph.D. in biology is from the Florida Institute of Technology. For thirty-two years I worked with Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Fort Pierce, Florida, and with the Dynamac Corporation at the Kennedy Space Center. I have over 43 years research experience in studying a variety of fish communities and ecologies throughout Florida and the Caribbean Sea. I have published over 70 technical and 30 popular papers on fish ecology. This work includes a comprehensive regional fish species list for the 1995 Indian River Lagoon Biodiversity Conference for the Bulletin Of Marine Science publication demonstrating that this Lagoon contains the most diverse fish fauna in U.S. waters. (The list is now found at the Fort Pierce Smithsonian Marine Specie Center’s website.) I have appeared on programs for the Discovery Channel, and was part of the first American research expedition into Cuban waters since the revolution for a Discovery Channel documentary.
1. The Larger Aquatic Ecosystem

I write this letter today because I have devoted a great deal of my life to studying the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and its largest tributary, the St. Lucie River Estuary (SLRE). I cannot emphasize too strongly how unique and extraordinary this aquatic area is, in comparison to other aquatic areas in Florida, and the United States. The unique indigenous aquatic fauna and high biodiversity of this particular location has made me an advocate for its conservation.

The epicenter of our country's aquatic biodiversity is the St. Lucie River Estuary. Due to the interplay of unique coral reefs, extensive submerged Anastasias rock formations and the proximity of the Continental shelf and tropical ocean currents in the near shore, and the convergence of ecotones in salinity and water temperature as well as ecological characteristics associated with prevailing winds, sea grass species diversity, tropical macro-algal flora, and mangrove forest wetlands the St. Lucie River Estuary, its watershed, the Indian River Lagoon, and adjacent continental shelf, can boast 800 fish species, nearly 2/3 of Florida's 1300 fish species.

Key to understanding my discussion below is that this setting supports maximum diversity in a relatively small area. Therefore, any anthropogenic changes, however small, will have a magnified impact.

2. Contemporaneous Events

We are now at risk of losing a national treasure, this unique estuary and the biodiversity it supports. It is well-documented that when Lake Okeechobee waters, and other tributaries discharge their load of nitrogen, phosphorus, heavy metals etc. into the SLRE, that toxic cyanobacteria, toxic dinoflagellates and fungal growth cause fish disease and reduce fish diversity. These discharges have a more catastrophic impact on this estuary than they would have on any other estuary in the U.S. Combining this year's prolonged and substantial discharges from Lake Okeechobee, with the sudden disappearance of the majority of sea grass (a keystone species) in much of the IRL, this very special area is under enormous stress. (At other locations within the IRL unprecedented increased mortality rates are occurring in indigenous marine mammals: manatees and bottle-nosed dolphin; and marine birds: pelicans) This aquatic system is presently at risk of collapse unless prompt corrective action is taken.

A public outcry over these diseased and declining ecosystems, the SLRE and IRL has resulted in national media coverage. Local press covers the issue daily. Fishing, environmental and civic interests are examining the option of legal action. A Congressional Briefing, initiated by U.S. Representative Patrick Murphy, on the state
of our local waters was recently held in Washington, DC, on October 3rd. On September 9th, I presented my scientific analysis of the problem to a six-County Commissioner task force. The Martin and St. Lucie County Commissions are asking Florida's governor to declare a state of emergency for our waterways. Rep. Murphy, along with U.S. Reps. Troy Radel and Steny Hoyer, and Florida's governor, Rick Scott, have requested President Obama to tour the area.

3. The CTPE Bridge and the NFSLR-AP and Evans Creek

Situated just a few miles north and upstream of the St. Lucie River Estuary, within this center of Florida's fish diversity, is the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve (NFSLR-AP), and its tributary, Evans Creek, in which the CTPE Bridge is proposed. This is a high value area precisely because of the extensive area of intact and undisturbed native vegetation, and because it is some distance upstream from the Lake Okeechobee discharges and some distance downstream from storm water treatment discharges, effectively providing opportunity for cleaner water. Evans Creek, a 7-mile long oxbow of the NFSLR, is a narrow, shallow, and thoroughly vegetated channel that provides valuable protective fish habitat. For these reasons this particular portion of the SLRE is extremely valuable in providing nursery habitat and organism refugia in an ecosystem that is under considerable stress at this time.

I recommend any environmental impact statement for the Bridge must include the stressed larger aquatic system in which the NFSLR-AP and Evans Creek are located. It must take into account the likely probability that this aquatic area is a vital refuge for numerous species during ecological crisis.

I am also a strong proponent of mapping species distributions and their critical micro-habitats. The key indicator on how to protect fish comes from observation of fish behavior and micro-habitat preferences in the wild. I recommend that species micro-habitat mapping of this area be performed both during the present water crisis and after the discharges have abated. These data should be included in any EIS.

Two research observations help clarify my recommendations. Fish such as snook and tarpon seek out very specific protected and abundantly vegetated micro-habitats within wetlands during their critical early developmental stages. My quantitative observations made over several decades demonstrated that these preferred nursery areas are not ubiquitous, and can be some distance apart. In Jack Island Preserve State Park, alongside the IRL in St. Lucie County, during a 3-hour set period, over 1,500 juvenile common snook were caught in a trap set in a mangrove forest tributary. Other adjacent mangrove tributary sites sampled with the same techniques at the same time did not produce juvenile snook. The common snook is
a valuable recreational fishery species under considerable legal management in south Florida and is another protected species documented in the NFSLR-AP. Tarpon, another valuable sport fishery species, were observed to prefer isolated ponds and upstream habitats. Adult and larval tarpon have been routinely captured migrating up the north fork of the St. Lucie River. We have documented tarpon abandoning critical habitats when they are modified or disturbed by dredging and construction activities. We are instructed here that once disturbed tarpon did not return to their previously favored site.

These documented observations demonstrate that possibly irreversible impacts could occur due to the construction of a large 6-lane bridge in these critical fish habitats in the St. Lucie River and Evans Creek.

Another listed species, and a species of special concern according to NOAA, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Opossum pipefish (*Microphis brachyurus lineatus*), has been documented in the NFSLR-AP. The only demonstrated and predictable breeding habitat for this species in the United States are the freshwater tributaries to the southern Indian River Lagoon, the St. Sebastian, St. Lucie and Loxahatchee rivers. It is a species I have had extensive experience with, and have highlighted it in several publications, including my chapter, in C. R. Gilbert, ed. *Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida, Vol. II Fishes* (1992). The pipefish travel far upstream in the St. Lucie River. The very same threats to the SLRE and the IRL threaten the very small numbers of remaining opossum pipefish, along with habitat destruction.

Breeding pairs of opossum pipefish require specific *Panicum* spp and *Polygonum* spp. of vegetation, a microhabitat that emerges sporadically in patches and clumps underwater. This grass species is especially vulnerable to herbicides and other anthropogenic impacts. (A preliminary plant species survey of the abutting Halpatiokee Trails section of the Savannas State Preserve Park lists three *Panicum* species. This diverse terrestrial complement to this aquatic area is also at risk of irreversible negative impacts caused by the bridge's construction.) Dense vegetation is also required for the crustacean and small prey fish of their diet. The bridge's construction, shading, and indirect run-off will either destroy or degrade the vegetation on which the pipefish depend for survival.

Because the pipefish are poor swimmers, protected enclaves like that found in Evans Creek would insure a protected haven from the increased water discharges from Lake Okeechobee from the south, and storm water discharges from the north. As I have stated elsewhere, the remaining natural portions of creeks and streams the pipefish need to survive, and their unique sympatric tropical associates, and the various gobies listed below should be preserved in the NFSLR-AP.
Besides the opossum pipefish, other members of this unique group of tropical peripheral fishes are also documented inhabitants of the NFSLR-AP, and they, too, are considered rare and/or threatened. They are: Bigmouth sleeper (*Gobiomorus dormitor*); the Slashcheek goby (*Gobionellus pseudofasciatus*); and the River goby (*Awaous banana*); whitemouth croaker, (*Micropogonias furnieri*); mountain mullet, (*Agonostomus monticola*); burro grunt, (*Pomadasys croco*); swordspine snook, (*Centropomus ensiferus*); largescale fat snook, (*C. mexicanus*). Within the United States, these species are only known to reproduce and have predictable resident populations in the St. Lucie River and its tributaries. It is highly likely that the present degradation of the St. Lucie River has placed these species in a more tenable condition for survival.

As I briefly explained above, absolutely essential to fish ecology is native vegetation, whether it be submerged vegetation like sea grass or the *Panicum* or *Polygonum* species, or mangroves along the banks, or inshore wetlands. Because so much biodiversity comes from a small aquatic area in the STLRE, every acre counts. When compared to wetland and seagrass acreage in other Florida estuaries, the IRL and STLRE have very little available fish habitat. For example, ninety-six percent of the tropical mangrove forest habitat is on the west coast of Florida, while the other four percent are in the IRL and its tributaries, like the St. Lucie River. (As its name suggests, the Mangrove rivulus (*Rivulus marmoratus*), a species of special concern that is a documented inhabitant of NFSLR-AP, requires mangrove habitat.) Every acre of inshore wetlands is precious because they support our near ocean, estuarine and riverine fisheries. Larvae and juveniles of our valuable offshore grouper and snapper bottom fisheries also depend on healthy Lagoon wetland and seagrass habitat to complete their life cycle.

Due to local urban and suburban growth, accompanied with seawalls, dredge and fill operations, wetland drainage or impounding, herbicide and fertilizer applications we are losing the very vegetative structure that insures the survival of this extraordinary fish diversity. This aquatic area can ill-afford additional loss and alteration of aquatic habitat, submerged vegetation, mangroves, and wetlands that will occur with the construction of a bridge though one of the healthiest, largest and least disturbed area of the Florida Aquatic Preserve, Evans Creek, and the wetlands of the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve.

The NFSLR-AP was created to conserve and protect essential habitat for native flora and fauna in perpetuity. I urge continued protection of this ecologically vital area, and ask the City, State, and Federal governments and agencies to pursue other options with far less ecological impact. If a bridge is to be built preference should be given to those areas already impacted and degraded by human construction. In my
Mr. Victor M. Mendez  
Page Six  

opinion, Route 1C is the most deleterious and harmful selection relative to aquatic impacts and impacts on a unique, indigenous and localized fauna.

Water connects all uplands with tributaries and estuaries. All coastal zone activities are interconnected through water. What we do to one part of our watershed ends up affecting other parts. That is why exceptional due diligence must be performed well in advance of any bridge construction, because it will, with no doubt, affect the aquatic health of the aquatic ecosystems surrounding the bridge and downstream.

If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours,

R. Grant Gilmore, Jr., Ph.D.  
Senior Scientist  
Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Science, Inc.  
5920 First St. SW  
Vero Beach, FL 32968  
772-562-5611  
772-562-9156

cc: via email  
Robert Hartsell, Esq.  
Robert@hartsell-Law.com
EXHIBIT B
October 29, 2013

Victor M. Mendez  
Administrator,  
Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  

1101 Audubon Way  
Maitland, Florida 32751  
Tel: (407) 539-5700  
Cell (407) 620-5178  
email: Chlee2@earthlink.net

RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, City of Port St. Lucie

Dear Administrator Mendez:

Audubon Florida, the state's oldest and largest conservation organization, comments on the EIS and the proposed project and requests action by FHWA to abandon and withdraw federal funding from this project.

This proposed facility would occupy lands that are part of the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannahs State Preserve, the North Fork of the St. Luce River which comprises a State Aquatic Preserve, including Evans Creek.

A federal highway facility, or federally funded highway project that crosses these parklands and destroys natural resources within them presents conflicts with Section 4F of the Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. §303 and 23 U.S.C. §138.

The project also crosses the St. Lucie River at a location immediately adjacent to an important wildlife sanctuary owned by the Florida Audubon Society, Inc. The natural areas that would be impacted by this highway are of vital importance to a large number of species of migratory birds which transit the Eastern Flyway.

Numerous species are listed as Species of Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered. Please see the complete list of protected species catalogued for the lands to be impacted by this project, which can be found at:
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/sites/northfork/pub/NF_Listed_Species.pdf

Audubon Florida objects to this project and urges you to decline further federal funding.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Charles Lee  
Director of Advocacy
April 16, 2012

Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood and Administrator Mendez:

I am writing on behalf of the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County and the Indian Riverkeeper to express our concern about the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension in Port St. Lucie, Florida and its impacts to state park lands.

The Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County was established in 1972 by local citizens concerned about increasing threats to the area’s natural resources and environment. A significant portion of the Alliance’s advocacy over the years has focused on the protection of the Savannas Preserve State Park as well as the area’s coastal environment.

The mission of the Indian River Keeper is to protect and restore the waters of North America’s most diverse estuary—the Indian River Lagoon, its tributaries, fisheries and habitats through advocacy, enforcement and citizen action. Indian Riverkeeper is one of nearly 200 member organizations of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

We believe FHWA has not adequately analyzed the impacts to resources protected under section 4(f) of the Highway Transportation Act. The agency’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and preliminary 4(f) determination improperly dismisses a feasible and prudent alternative (Alternative 6A) that would avoid impacting state park lands. We urge FHWA to reexamine the preferred alternative identified in the DEIS and pursue an alternative that avoids all impacts to state lands.

The Everglades Law Center, Inc. is a tax-exempt Florida not-for-profit corporation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
Section 4f of the Transportation Act prohibits the Secretary of Transportation from approving a federal highway project that uses the land of a public park, recreation area, wildlife refuge, or history site unless:

(1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and
(2) the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use. 49 U.S.C. § 303(c).

An alternative is “feasible” “if it can be built as a matter of sound engineering” and prudent “unless there are truly unusual factors present in a particular case or the cost or community disruption resulting from alternative routes reached extraordinary magnitudes” or the alternative routes present “unique problems.” Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe, 401 U.S. 402, 411-413 (1971) (emphasis added).

FHWA has promulgated regulations interpreting 4(f)’s mandate. The regulations set forth in 23 C.F.R. § 774.17 provide that an alternative is not prudent if:

(i) It compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need;

(ii) It results in unacceptable safety or operational problems;

(iii) After reasonable mitigation, it still causes:

(A) Severe social, economic, or environmental impacts;
(B) Severe disruption to established communities;
(C) Severe disproportionate impacts to minority or low income populations; or
(D) Severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;

(iv) It results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational costs of an extraordinary magnitude;

(v) It causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or

(vi) It involves multiple factors in paragraphs (3)(i) through (3)(v) of this definition, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude.

In September 2011, FHWA released its DEIS for the “Crosstown Parkway Extension” project—a proposed two mile road and bridge project that would extend the existing Crosstown Parkway across the North Fork of the St. Lucie River to U.S.1 on the east. DEIS at 1.1. The DEIS identifies a no build alternative, a transportation system management (TSM) alternative, a multimodal alternative, and six build alternatives. Of
these six build alternatives, the DEIS identifies Alternative “1C” as the preferred alternative.

According to the DEIS, Alternative 1C would have the most direct impact on wetlands, the highest impact on essential fish habitat, and the second highest upland impacts of all the six build alternatives. It would use approximately 2 acres of lands from Savannah Preserve State Park and force the relocation of the Park’s Halpatiokee Canoe and Nature Trail, which is used for public recreation, educational outings, and wildlife observation. In comparison, Alternative 6A (with the proper engineering) would have zero impacts to 4f resources, cost some $35 million less than Alternative C, and have fewer impacts to listed species.

Although FHWA contends that Alternative 6A is feasible, it concludes that it is otherwise not “prudent” because it meets one or more of the prudence standards set forth in 23 C.F.R. § 774.17. Specifically, FHWA has preliminarily determined that after mitigation Alternative 6A would (1) cause severe disruption to established communities as a result of substantial community cohesion and local mobility impacts; (2) have other unique problems or unusual factors (substantial visual and noise impacts and access/traffic issues); and (3) present cumulative unique problems or extraordinary impacts (collective operational, visual, noise, cohesion, mobility, and access impacts).

To reach this determination, the DEIS focuses predominately on the alternative’s potential disruption to a single residential development (the La Buona Vita neighborhood). It states that the alternative would require the relocation of an entrance road to the neighborhood and would require a new access road to be created into the rear of the community. Yet, there is no discussion of how the relocation of the access road would severely impact the overall cohesion and mobility of the community, other than redirecting traffic patterns towards the rear of the community. It does not appear Alternative 6A would fragment, bisect, or otherwise alienate any one portion of the La Buona Vita community from the other. Moreover, the DEIS falls far short of clearly articulating how altered traffic patterns would severely disrupt the cohesion (the degree of “bonding” or sense of “togetherness”) of this one neighborhood. To the extent FHWA asserts that Alternative 6A would have substantial mobility impacts, it summarily concludes that such impacts would arise due to the introduction of cul-de-sacs, dead ends, and cutting off of certain roads. See DEIS at 5.24. However, FHWA concedes that these impacts are not unique to Alternative 6A and states “all build alternatives would change local traffic patterns through the established communities in the study area; creating a number of cul-de-sacs, redirected rods, and restricted access.” DEIS at 5.23-5.24. Considering that such impacts are common to all of the build alternatives (including the preferred alternative) the DEIS does not provide sufficient detail as to how these modifications would severely hamper local mobility. Further troubling is FHWA’s decision to seemingly count these community, mobility, and access impacts multiple times as part of its preliminary 4(f) determination by also characterizing them as “other unique problems or unusual factors” and “cumulative unique problems or extraordinary
impacts. These characterizations, coupled with incomplete and even erroneous information and analysis, exaggerate the true scope of Alternative 6A’s impacts.

As the DEIS notes, numerous roadway modifications (between 18-27) are unavoidable and will be required to implement any one of the six build alternatives. The agency’s decision to scrap the only build alternative that would avoid using 4f resources because of the potential impacts certain roadway modifications may have on one community is unconvincing, particularly in view of the agency’s position that all build alternatives would actually enhance regional cohesion, mobility, and safety/emergency response by providing a connection across the St. Lucie River. Moreover, FHWA’s substantial reliance on inherently subjective criteria for rendering an alternative not prudent (i.e., social impacts, and specifically “community cohesion”), in the face of numerous quantifiable impacts that the preferred alternative would pose to protected 4f resources, is particularly problematic and unavailing in the absence of a reasoned explanation for the agency’s decision.

In enacting section 4f of the Transportation Act, Congress determined that the protection of parkland should be given paramount importance. Overton Park, at 412-13. As the Supreme Court explained: “The few green havens that are public parks are not to be lost unless there are truly unusual factors present in a particular case or the cost or community disruption resulting from alternative routes reached extraordinary magnitudes. If the statutes are to have any meaning, the Secretary cannot approve the destruction of park land unless he finds that alternative routes present unique problems.” Id. at 413. The Secretary’s 4(f) determination is subject to a thorough, probing, in-depth review of whether the Secretary reasonably believed there are no feasible and prudent alternatives based on all relevant factors. Id. at 415-16.


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1 See Table 6.6 wherein access impacts to the La Buona Vita community are identified as triggering three different prudency factors.
2 The Preliminary 4f determination erroneously states that Alternative 6A would have substantial and collective visual impacts despite a finding in the DEIS that this alternative would have “minimal” visual impacts. See DEIS at 5.40. In addition, while the DEIS finds the noise impacts of Alternative 6A would be “substantial” because half of the impacted receivers would not receive the benefit of noise abatement, the DEIS does not articulate how these unabated impacts (noise levels) would be so substantial that they would render Alternative 6A not prudent. See Section 5.3.4, DEIS.
3 FHWA appears to acknowledge this much on page 5.2 of the DEIS: “The relative magnitude of social and economic effects can vary across communities, neighborhoods, and stakeholder groups due to differing degrees of sensitivity toward a particular issue or impact. An impact that is perceived by one community as adverse might be tolerated or even desirable by another. Guidance for social and economic impacts have been established by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.7 and 1508.8].”
In this instance, we do not believe that the DEIS and preliminary 4f determination provides a reasoned explanation as to why Alternative 6A is not prudent. The analysis fails to adequately explain how in its totality this alternative "reaches extraordinary magnitudes" or "presents problems that are otherwise unique to this one alternative" which prohibit it from being the preferred alternative. We therefore urge FHWA to reexamine its analysis of Alternative 6A and its tentative selection of Alternative IC as the preferred alternative and choose an alignment that avoids the use of Savannas State Park and all other 4f resources.

Sincerely,

Jason Totoiu

Cc: Secretary Ananth Prasad  
Florida Department of Transportation  
605 Suwannee Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

Clay Smallwood  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
State Lands  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Donald Forgione  
Director  
Florida Park Service  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Florida Park Service  
Bureau Chief  
Southeast Region  
District 5 Administration  
13798 SE Federal Highway  
Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

Park Manager  
Savannas Preserve State Park  
2541 Walton Road  
Port St. Lucie, Florida 34952
October 27, 2013

Victor M. Mendez  
Federal Highway Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  

Re: Federal Project Number: 7777-087-A

Dear Administrator Mendez:

I am writing in regard to the Crosstown Parkway Bridge project proposed by the City of Port St. Lucie, Fla. They are choosing to implement Alternative 1C which is to build a six lane highway bridge through the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve, as well as the widest section of the North Fork of the St. Luce River State Aquatic Preserve including Evans Creek.

I am a concerned local citizen, but also an ecologist who has studied the habitats and animals within the Indian River Lagoon watershed for the last 25 years. I have worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where my focus was on endangered species and habitat restoration. I am a former curator of the Manatee Observation and Education Center. I am also the author of a book about the ecology and history of the area called *Treasured Waters – The Indian River Lagoon* published by Pioneer River Press. I have a Master of Science in ecology from the Florida Institute of Technology. For my master’s thesis, I studied wading bird (including federally listed species) utilization of man-made versus natural wetlands.

You have received a letter from my colleague, Dr. Grant Gilmore, and I concur with his assessment of the destructive nature of the current proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension, Alternative 1C. Dr. Gilmore’s expertise is primarily with fish and their habitat requirements. He has described the overall stress that the Indian River Lagoon is undergoing. It is an ecosystem that is in a critical state, especially where the proposed project 1C will take place.

The St. Luce River State Aquatic Preserve is a habitat for federally listed endangered species, such as the wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) and the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). The project’s Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated November 2010 indicates that manatees utilize the project area. The project area
has also been designated by the State of Florida as a Critical Foraging Area for wood storks. The proposed project will alter this habitat causing further stress to endangered species populations in the region, including wood storks and manatees.

Manatees have been dying in the lagoon at unprecedented rates this year. Scientists believe it is due to the loss of their primary food source - seagrass. Over the past two years, more than 47,000 acres of seagrass habitat has been lost in northern section of the lagoon. As a result, manatees have resorted to eating an algae that is toxic to their systems and is killing them. The proposed project will disrupt foraging and resting areas for manatees – a species already under duress in this region.

I must also note that according to the EIS, Alternative 1 C will have the highest impact to wetlands versus the other build alternatives proposed (Table 3, Summary of Quantified Direct and Temporary Impacts (acres) Estimated for Each Build Alternative, pages 42 – 47). The EIS also states that this project would have the most direct impact on overall natural habitats (wetlands and uplands; residential lots excluded) with 18.39 acres of direct fill impacts. If constructed, the bridge would shade habitat reducing plant growth. The EIS states that these shaded habitats would retain at least some fish and wildlife functions, although their functioning could be substantially reduced. It also indicates that Alternative 1C would shade the most habitat (13.71 acres).

Building a six-lane bridge through the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve and the North Fork St. Lucie River will have disturbing consequences for the flora and fauna in the proposed project location which is one of the most diverse areas in eastern Port St. Lucie. A Florida Department of Environmental Protection interpretive sign at the project site notes the importance of species diversity in this preserve. Federally listed species in the IRL watershed, including manatees and wood storks, will suffer if the 1C project is pursued. Also, please note that having healthy and well-functioning ecosystems provide a number of vital services important to human health and well-being.

In closing, I ask that you consider other alternatives to building a six lane highway and bridge over one of the most diverse pieces of habitat in the area.

Sincerely yours,

Camille S. Yates
(772) 971-9798
Yates cs@comcast.net
October, 23, 2013
Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Proposed Route 1C of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge, Port St. Lucie, FL

The Board of Directors of the Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society wishes to reiterate its support for preserving the Little Haldia Okie uplands and the North Fork Buffer Preserve that lie in the projected path of Port St Lucie’s Crosstown Parkway.

This property is an ecological gem that the town/city should strive to protect as a place that its citizens and visitors can come to learn about Florida’s natural areas. Within its bounds there are seven different ecosystems, each with particular unique communities of plants and animals.

Our original comments about this proposed crossing was in a 1999 letter to Secretary David Struhs (attached). The more recent process to get stakeholders to support a particular route, did not reach out to those of us in Martin County who have, in the past, raised questions and concerns.

While the options to send the road to the north or south of this conservation land seem to be fraught with problems, going through this pristine habitat is also extremely problematic. There are listed species of both plants and animals that will be impacted. (either wiped out or shaded or dumped on by garbage from the bridge). Splitting this large continuous stretch of conservation land will diminish its conservation value by more than the built footprint of the bridge and its right of way. The noise and light pollution will reach hundreds of yards up and down the river. The bridge itself will undoubtedly become a deterrence to the movements of many species that have the requirement for large habitat ranges.

Some of the listed species associated with this particular gem were on view during a recent visit. A gopher turtle (happily munching grasses in the parking lot), Conradina grandiflora (large flowered rosemary), Rose pagonia, Nodding pinweed and the Cardinal air plant all call this region home.

Also please consider that these few acres are part of an important resting spot for migrating birds as they head to, or come back from, their wintering places in South or Central America. The Eastern flyway goes right through our area.

Please consider carefully what the plan for this structure will do to the innocent creatures that rely on these bio-rich habitats. We owe it to future generations to consider carefully what conservation means.

Sincerely,
Joan Bausch, Conservation Chair, Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

cc: Robert Hartsell, Esq.
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Cenchrus spinifex  Coastal sandspur
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Dicanthellium erectifolium  Erect witchgrass
Dicanthellium pondericense  Hemlock witchgrass
Digitaria filiformis  Slender crabgrass
Eleusine indica  Yardgrass or goosegrass*
Pennisetum ruppiaeflorum  Pine weeds finger grass
Melinis repens  Roset natalgrass*
Panicum anceps  Beaked panicum
Panicum hemitomon  Maidencane
Panicum rigidulum  Redtop panicum
Schizachyrium scoparium  Little bluestem
Setaria punila  Yellow foxtail*
Sagina pedunculata  American cupscale
Sporobolus indicus  Smutgrass*
Smilax auriculata  Earleaf greenbrier
Xyris ambiguus  Coastalplain yellow-eyed grass
Xyris caroliniana  Carolina yellow-eyed grass

Similaceae
Xyridaceae

Dicots

Annonaceae
Anacardiaceae

Aquifoliaceae

Araliaceae

Asteraceae

Annona glabra  Pond apple
Asimina sp.  pawpaw
Rhus copallinum  Winged sumac
Schinus terebinthifolius  Brazilian Pepper*
Toxicodendron radicans  Eastern poison Ivy
Ilex cassine  Dagoen holly
Ilex glabra  Gallberry
Hydrocotyle umbellata  Mayflower marsh pennywort
Ambrosia artemisifolia  Common ragweed
Baccharis glomeruliflora  Silverling
Baldinia angustifolia  Coastalplain honey combhead
Bidens alba  Spanish needles
Bidens mitis  Smallfruit beggar ticks
Chrysopsis scabrella  Coastalplain golden aster
Emilia fosbergii  Florida tassel flower
Eupatorium capillifolium  Dog fennel
Heterotheca subaxillaris  Camphor weed
Mikania scandens  Climbing hempvine
Palafaxia feyi  Feen's palafax
Pityopsis graminifolia  Narrowleaf silk grass
Pluchea fastida  Stinking camphorweed
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- Richardia grandiflora
- Spermacoce verticillata
- Salix caroliniana

Sapindaceae
- Acer rubrum
- Anpelesis arborea
- Parthenocissus quinquefolia

Vitaceae
- Vitis rotundifolia
- Vitis shuttleworthii

Wild coffee
- Largeflower Mexican clover*
- Shrubby false buttonwood
- Carolina willow
- Red maple
- Peppervine
- Virginia creeper
- Muscadine
- Collage grape
June 17, 1999

To: David B. Struhs, Secretary
3900 Commonwealth Blvd M.S.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Re: Bridge right-of-way over Halpatiokee, North Fork Buffer Preserve

The Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society recently had a most pleasant tour of the aquatic buffer preserve along the North Fork of the St Lucie River, known as Halpatiokee. [on US Hwy #1 at Village green Drive, PSL] Many thanks to Jeff Beal for his time and expertise.

We have learned that Port St Lucie has applied to the DEP for a bridge "right of way" directly over this beautifully pristine and widely diverse habitat. These few acres alone yield seven separate ecological habitats. Of the 125 plant species identified, 19 are endangered, threatened or a species of special concern. Among the 101 animal species noted so far, 16 are on those lists.

PLEASE DON'T DESTROY THIS SPECIAL PLACE!

We understand that Port St Lucie needs to relieve traffic problems, we believe this is the wrong path. We respectfully request that DEP steer PSL to consider alternate sites, already impacted, to the north.

We are highly concerned, as well, that precedents would be set allowing the degradation of lands purchased through environmental land acquisition programs (CARL, specifically).

Another issue, but related, would be the hope of some PSL people to construct a bridge over the Indian River Lagoon, crossing state preserve lands known as the Savannas. Both the savannas and the sea grasses of the Indian River Lagoon are special, as you may be aware.

We strongly object to the impact that these projects would bring to these native plant habitats.

Sincerely,

Joan Bausch
for the Board of Directors, Martin County Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society

cc: Larry Nall, DEP Div. Marine Resources, 3900 Commonwealth Blvd MS 10,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000;
Jeff Beal, Southeast District Branch Office, 1801 SE Hillmoor Drive, Suite C204, Port
St. Lucie, FL 34952

Post Office Box 801, Jensen Beach, Florida 34958-0801
North Fork St. Lucie River Buffer Preserve

Location of Halpatiokee Canoe and Nature Trail

Port St. Lucie

ST. LUCIE
MARTIN

N
North Fork Buffer Preserve
an ecological gem in PSL

By Joan Bausch
special to the News

Our group of native plant detectives was seeking an ecological gem tucked beside U.S. 1 in Port St. Lucie, near Village Green Drive and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

A simple brown sign and a metal gate mark the unpaved entrance to a fine example of biological diversity in the real Florida. Bought with CARL funds, this aquatic preserve and upland buffer is under the protection of the southeast division of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The property extends west from U.S. 1, across Evans Creek, past the island to home sites beyond the western shore of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River. We were to visit the area nearest the highway. Road construction and equipment required us to have a second set of eyes while trying to locate the modest entrance.

The slash pines visible from the road indicate a flatwood habitat. It’s thick with slash pine, cabbage palm, saw palmetto, the gallberry and rusty lyonia. The tarflower was in bloom throughout, lending its scent. A pair of love bugs was stuck to the sweet white blossom. This is a mesic (moderately moist) flatwood, according to our guide.

He pointed out *Rhizia nashii*, a lavender meadow beauty with four leaves that grows only in wet pine-lands. A few more steps along the firebreak trail and we were in a seepage stream, which our guide called a blackwater. A bay gall also was nearby, he said.

Fortunately, the park managers have placed boards and bridges to cross the wettest places. Moisture-loving species found this area most agreeable. Red maple, saw-grass, Dahoon holly and swamp bay shared space with some of the smaller species, such as the hypericum called St. Andrew’s Cross, the ubiquitous pine lily and red-root.

Many a native plant detective was down on his or her knees to view a tiny, thumb-sized, mauve ground orchid. From this vantage point we also took note of pinewort with its round, white flower head on a tall, skinny stem, which we had seen in the wet places of the sawannas.

A young sand pine puzzled some, since it had no seed cone yet, and was growing in some of the wettest soil. But it made sense when we looked upward toward the hill, to see a large mother sand pine atop the sand ridge. A typical dry scrub includes live scrub oak with its tough green oval-shaped leaves, and the turkey oak, looking more like the pin oaks I knew from New Jersey. After a bit of “mountain-climbing” we found a sand live oak with a trunk 4 to 6 inches in diameter, big for this slow-growing species. The parasitic love vine draped some trees and shrubs, while gopher apple hugged the ground. Our eyes needed fine-tuning to see some of the smallest plants in the scrub like the spectacular “British soldier” lichen with its bright red coloring. A live oak hammock took shape as we headed down the path from the scrub on the other side of the hill to the mangroves at water’s edge and a small but adequate dock. Large live oaks arched gracefully over the St. Lucie River supporting many epiphytes, like the resurrection fern, and tillandsia, like wild pine and Spanish moss.

Because Evans Creek is more fishy water than salt, we found button bush growing among the mangroves. One of its common names is “Spunkt,” because the shape of the 1½-inch flower resembles the Russian satellite.

On our way back to the parking lot we took the winding trail. We heard the snorts of wild boar. I thought of how they root in the dirt, causing havoc in a habitat, and was grateful that we did not come face to face. Of the plant and animal species recorded by land managers, many are listed as endangered, threatened or species of special concern.

Who would have imagined such an environmental treasure exists within Port St. Lucie? We hope residents and officials will continue to preserve this gem as they plan ways to control traffic problems.

The public is welcome to the opening program of the Martin County chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society on Tuesday evening, when Maggy Hurchalla will bring Lake Okeechobee’s old shoreline and the native plants found there to life as she discusses pre-dam days. On Saturday we’ll carpool to a site to examine the plants firsthand and have a look at Lake O today. Bring a picnic lunch, if you like; water, sun protection and insect repellent are recommended. Information about our weekend trip to the Keys in November will be available.

A tour of our native plant nursery will be available at 7 p.m. The meeting begins at 7:30 at the Environmental Studies Center, 2900 Indian River Drive, Jensen Beach, just south of Ocean Breeze.

Members will share with visitors Florida’s natural landscape at mini-workshops during the Good Nature Outreach project of the Environmental Studies Center the first Saturday of the month. The center’s number is 219-1887.
September 20, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Captain Donald Voss. I am founder and Operations Director of Marine Cleanup Initiative Inc, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization tasked with the removal of marine debris and protection of our aquatic animals. I am also the outgoing Oceana Ocean Hero for 2012. In my functions I travel the rivers and waterways evaluating and locating backlogs of debris and schedule it for removal. I am writing this letter in support of Conservation Alliance of St Lucie County’s position to block the construction of a 6 lane bridge right through the Halpatiokee section of the Savannas State preserve. This waterway is a vital part of what has been deemed the most pristine part of the river.

There are 6 different locations that were considered for this connector highway from Tradition’s to Walton RD and eventually across the ICW. In my travels, I cross under many bridges and I have a total understanding of the noise, vibrations, highway trash and chemical releases that occur when large amounts of traffic cross over a unique and delicate area. Marine Cleanup Initiative Inc requests that this property be taken off the table and less sensitive land be used for a bridge to move Tradition’s people. With the shock and damage done to our waterway currently by the dumping of toxic waters of Lake Okeechobee, the waterways are as over-taxied as they can be. At some point sanity needs to play a part of Florida planning.

In 2001, Marine Cleanup Initiative Inc began the first scuba divers underwater marine debris removal and netted 1600 pounds. The last 13 years, that small group has grown to hundreds of volunteers. We operate from the Sebastian Inlet to the Donald Ross Bridge covering 4 inlets, four counties and 96 miles of the estuary. Of this area cleaned, there are a dozen bridges and under any highway traffic bridge we will remove: tires, batteries, fishing gear, plastics, bottles, cans, wood, construction debris, mattresses, cell phones and all kinds of nets and tarps. When people stop or doing work on a bridge, they invariably throw anything into the water they do not wish to carry or dispose of properly. 40% (or 160,000 pounds) of the materials we have collected came from around bridges.
Marine Cleanup Initiative is outraged that the maps, charts and dialog currently available has this bridge and this location marked as a "done deal" without proper public discussion, hearings or input. It is an outrage this is being considered as a location and this will carry forward to elections and how we address those who were tasked with managing our preserves and natural resources. There are plenty of good people who could fill these jobs. Stop the madness and move the bridge to less sensitive land.

Thank you,

Captain Donald Voss
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Your comments will be included as part of our project records.

Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Caroline Herzog [mailto:gumbolimbocarol@att.net]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 01, 2014 10:15 PM  
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)  
Subject: Fw: Crosstown Parkway Bridge

Please note that I sent the e-mail below at 11:46 P.M., December 30th. However, I had an error in the address. I hope you will consider my position.

Thank you.

Carol Herzog

----- Forwarded Message -----  
From: Caroline Herzog <gumbolimbocarol@att.net>  
To: "cathy.kendall@dot.gov" <cathy.kendall@dot.gov>  
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2013 11:46 PM  
Subject: Crosstown Parkway Bridge

I am against building the Crosstown Parkway Bridge because this fragile area is so valuable as a fish nursery.

yours,

Sincerely

Carol C. Herzog
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Your comments will be included as part of our project records.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Douglas Hess [mailto:dphess@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 7:30 AM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: opposed /Crosstown Bridge

Ms Kendall,
Both my husband and I are opposed to the construction of the Crosstown Bridge and the destruction of a precious part of the Savannas, the Halpatiokee Park.
Marguerite and Douglas Hess
1195 Ocean view circle
Jensen Beach, Fla. 34957
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
We at the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County are urging Florida's DOT that it's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge. Two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation.

Here's the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:

* The destruction of Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve
* Degradation of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.

It seems as though the nearby bridges are more than adequate. Unless you can show us why a new bridge built between these two existing is absolutely necessary, we seriously question it's planned construction.

Robert E Hickerson
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

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If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.
Dear Ms. Kendall:

I have long been an advocate of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River. I acknowledge that a 3rd east-west crossing is needed within the City of Port St. Lucie. What is NOT needed is the 1C route which the city has chosen as it has a direct impact on the Aquatic Preserve and Halpatiokee State Preserve.

The best alternative would be 1F or 6A. Both take the span out of the Aquatic Preserve and Halpatiokee State Preserve, the most sensitive areas along the entire length of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

In the past, the justification statements from the City for the need of the Crosstown Parkway was for another emergency evacuation route; the need to move patients from the west side of the city to the east side of the city where the hospital was located; faster emergency services (police, fire) to the east side of the river, etc. In fact, the justification for the span has morphed several times over since the beginning of this project.

There are some very plain and simple explanations as to how this was sold to the citizens. None of it good. The fact is, most of the growth of the city is on the west side of the river. There are no major employment centers along US1, as stated within the current justification. US1 within the City of Port St. Lucie is peppered with shuttered strip malls and vacant store fronts.

There is a new hospital which recently opened, on the west side of the river within the Southern Groves Annexation, referred to within the justification statement as the Western Annexation Area. Southern Groves also has a high employment base which is currently in the development phase.

What is on the east side of the city is the City Center. A development by the city to build a Civic Center and of which has been completed for the past several years. Unfortunately, there is nothing to "drive" the citizens from the west side of the city to the east side of the city to utilize the Civic Center.

The Crosstown Parkway has always been said that the real use of the parkway would be to funnel traffic straight to the city owned Civic Center. At recent events held at the Civic Center, those residents in the Western Annexation complained because they had to take PSL Blvd to US1 and then travel a mere two miles to the Civic Center. It is a matter of "convenience" to the western citizens to get to the Civic Center faster.
Is that enough justification to damage Halpatiokee and the Aquatic Preserve? I don't believe it is.

If the span were to move to either 1F or 6A, it takes the east landing and moves it north of the city's owned Civic Center, thereby reducing the traffic flow directly to the Civic Center. We are talking about less than a 1/2 mile move north for the east landing of the span on US1. Most of the employment is on the north of Prima Vista, in the Fort Pierce area.

If you have ever been to Port St. Lucie during an evacuation, everyone east of the river moves westward. From there, if areas south of our city are also being evacuated, there is no roadway to take northward for evacuation purposes. I95 becomes a parking lot because those south of us, in heavily populated Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties, are also evacuating. The turnpike also becomes a major parking lot. The last time I was evacuated from this area, I sat in backlog on the turnpike, with no where to get off, for nearly 9 hours and I didn't even make it to Orlando which is normally a 1 1/2 hour drive.

There are no major employment centers along US1. Liberty Medical is well south of the proposed 1C landing and is within 1/10ths of a mile north of PSL Blvd. There is a hospital on the west side of the river. There is a hospital on the east side of the river. Crosstown Parkway would not be used for evacuation purposes by those of us who know better from the last evacuation of this area. I95 hags the coast to the north of us and in a true evacuation, those citizens east of I95 are evacuated and I95 is eventually closed to traffic and shuffled further west to Florida's Turnpike.

Most recently, the city approved a CRA in the Southern Groves Annexation Area (Western Annexation Area) and touted the Crosstown Parkway, even though it is not linked to the Eastern CRA (City owned Civic Center), as the "tool" which "linked" the two CRA's into one, a requirement within Florida Statutes. What a bill of goods that was when being "sold" to the council. If an alternate route, like 1F or 6A were to be chosen by your department, there would no longer be the "link" between the two CRA areas, even though they are 8 - 10 miles apart as the crow flies.

Yes, there is a need for a third crossing within the City of Port St. Lucie, but is it truly justified enough to harm the Aquatic Preserve, Halpatiokee State Preserve and even the Savanna's State Preserve? I don't believe it is at the city's chosen 1C landing on US1.

Alternatives 1F and 6A are more viable to the citizens and friendlier to the environment.

Think of it this way. If you lived south of the Prima Vista east west corridor, and north of the proposed Crosstown Parkway, you might take the Crosstown Parkway if you worked farther south, but not if you worked north of the Crosstown. You would take Prima Vista.
If you live south of the Crosstown Parkway and worked farther south, you wouldn't take the Crosstown Parkway at all. You would take PSL Blvd. If you worked north of the Crosstown Parkway, you might take the Crosstown Parkway to US1 to continue your journey north. But why would you take the Crosstown Parkway if you worked north, only to come south at the proposed landing of 1C and then go north again?

In my case, I live south of PSL Blvd. Since the completion of the Crosstown Parkway from Manth westward to the Southern Groves Annexation CRA, I have only used the Crosstown Parkway once in all of these years. I wanted to visit the proposed Western CRA and see the linkage to the eastern CRA via the Crosstown Parkway.

As to the hospital and emergency care. Those living between Airoso and Floresta, using the Crosstown Parkway, would have their choice of using the western hospital or the eastern hospital. If the landing were at the City's chosen 1C location, patients would still have to travel south on US1 approximately 2 miles to the eastern hospital. To the western hospital, they would have to travel approximately 3 miles south of Crosstown Parkway, through Tradition to reach the hospital.

Finally, what happens in the Aquatic Preserve and Halpatiokee State Preserve has a direct impact on the North Fork of the St Lucie River and to the watersheds to the south of us.

Who is standing up for the river? I am standing up for the river, just as I have been since the '70's. The city can mitigate all they want to restore damaged areas in the preserves, but it will take at least 40 years for that damage to be reversed.

Please do not allow the City to ravage the preserves by approving the 1C landing on US1. Our preserves are one of only a few remaining jewels along the Treasure Coast and the lifeblood of many who rely upon the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

Thank you for your time.

Victoria Huggins
1862 SE Erwin Road
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
772-335-1993
From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 11:00 AM
To: jsjanci@gmail.com
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov
Subject: RE: Crosstown bridge

Thank you for your comments in support of the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA's assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA – FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
It's about time this bridge is completed. Wish it was to be done sooner. The houses that are in the way should have been bought when prices were at their low point so those people could buy a house at a bargain.

JEROME JANCI
5017 NW Coventry Circle
PSL 34986

Sent from my iPad
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Your comments will be included as part of our project records.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: georgejonesl@aol.com [mailto:georgejonesl@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2013 7:24 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Crosstown Parkway Bridge

I am writing this E-Mail to express my objection to the construction of the Crosstown Parkway Bridge through the Savannas State Park Preserve Lands. These lands were purchased (Yes Purchased with environmental lands protection funds) for all the citizens of the State of Florida to enjoy and use. Not for the selective use of the City of Port St Lucie, and it's residents. There are other less damaging routes available, but these routes have been consistently pushed aside by the City and it's consultants for years, as the City has always had a closed mind to any route other than the use of the State Park Lands. Use of these lands is also in direct conflict with prior legal opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court which state, if a feasible and prudent alternative route exists, park lands are to be spared, and Federal funds not expended. Not only do alternative routes exist, all alternative routes that were studied are less environmentally damaging, and more cost efficient. As a resident of the City of Port St. Lucie I am disgusted at the corruption, and lack of public concern this City's leadership shows, and am sure if they continue to push for this route we will find sunshine law violations over the entire length of this corrupted process once the legal effort to stop this project begins. I am also sure you also have your marching orders from the political appointees from who you, or your boss works, since as a past 34 year employee in State Government at a Bureau Chief level, I understand how the process works! I also understand what public records to request and the right questions to ask staff once legal action starts, so please advise your bosses if this was not their decision, but the decision of others before them, there is still time to select one of the alternative routes before the legal, and political fall-out from the selection of this route really begin. It is an election year coming up, and the protection of our rivers and public waters is front and center after all the problems of this past summer. I am sure all the public that is currently demanding protection of the rivers will see this route for what it is...another assault on public resources and another insult to the St Lucie River and the wetlands needed to protect our rivers water quality. I am sure if selected this route will result in many environmental groups and regular citizens expressing their objections at public meetings, (not controlled by the city's consultants) and at the polls as well!! So please make sure Gov. Scott and his DOT and DEP political appointees understand what is at stake for them, since I am sure the Protection of the Resources is not a major concern for them, but their re-election and re-appointment might be.

George L. Jones
1182 SE Mendavia Ave.
Port St. Lucie, Fl. 34952
Cell # 772-380-2039
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida. Thank you, also, for forwarding your letter to the editor of the local paper.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

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Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Ms Kendall,

Below is a copy of a letter to the Editor that was published on Dec 1, 2013 of the Stuart News ( TCPALM ), as you can see I am opposed to the 'Crosstown Bridge'.
I am a resident of Stuart yes, but the park that the bridge will destroy belongs to all of us residents of Florida.

Pamela Joy

Dear Editor:

"You can't recreate something that nature created over many, many years."

What a lovely quote from Shari Anker of the St. Lucie Conservation Alliance. Shari's words appeared in the News' story of 11/20/13 "Crosstown bridge in crosshairs."

St. Lucie's attempt to put a six-lane highway through St. Lucie's beautiful Savannas is very similar to Secretary of Transportation John Volpe's approval of a six-lane highway through Overton Park in Memphis, Tennessee. This approval was challenged in the courts by the citizens of Overton Park and eventually Volpe's decision was overturned in 1971 by the Supreme Court.

Justice Marshall for the Supreme Court: "The growing public concern about the quality of our natural environment has prompted Congress in recent years (late sixties) to enact legislation designed to curb the accelerating destruction of our country's natural beauty."

Various enacted statutes prohibit the Secretary of Transportation from authorizing the use of federal funds to finance the construction of highways through public parks if a "feasible and prudent" alternative route exists.

Keep your eye on this attempt to ruin the Savannas; many environmental groups including The Audubon Society, Martin County Conservation Alliance of Martin County, The Sierra Club and The Native Plant Society and many, many individuals oppose this egregious act to destroy our beautiful park.

Sincerely,

Pam Joy
666 SE Saint Lucie Blvd #1
Stuart, Florida 34996
772 220 4836
Dear Mr. Kaplan,

This is in response to your request to design the Crosstown Parkway bridge higher than the minimum over the North Fork of the Saint Lucie River.

As mentioned in your correspondence, and as noted in Section 3.2.2.2.4.2 (Bridge Clearance Requirements) of the FEIS, the minimum standard for vertical clearance for this project as established by the USCG is 18.6 feet. Presently the preliminary design is slightly higher than the minimum. The final vertical clearance may be different, and will be developed during the final design phase.

Environmental, social and economic factors were taken into consideration when determining elements of the project. There is also an inherent desire to keep the bridge profile as low as possible to minimize the visual impacts that the bridge will have on home owners near the river. In addition, a bascule bridge or increasing the vertical clearance at Port St Lucie Boulevard is not in FDOT’s current work program nor the long range plan.

If you require further information you can contact me or Mr. Frank Knott, City Project Manager, at FKnott@cityofpsl.com. Thank you for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,
Beatriz

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, CPM
Consultant Management
FDOT District Four
3400 West Commercial Blvd.
Ft Lauderdale, Fl 33309-3421
Telephone: 954 777 4336

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From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 5:29 PM
To: david.kaplan@gbfinc.net
Cc: laurastlucierealtor@gmail.com; shinx51@yahoo.com; Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov
Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge Height

Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of
Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

I am copying Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT Project Manager on your comments regarding the bridge height so that FDOT will be aware of your concerns and provide any additional information to you that may be helpful.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Caicedo, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have more questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: David Kaplan [mailto:david.kaplan@gbfinc.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 3:27 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Cc: laurastlucierealtor@gmail. com; 'Sheila Croghan'
Subject: FW: Crosstown Parkway Bridge Height

Ms. Kendall,

Please see attached request to keep Crosstown Parkway bridge height higher than minimum over the north fork of the Saint Lucie River.

Thank You,

David H. Kaplan, President
River Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.
410 SE Naranja Ave.
PSL FL 34983
Cell# (954) 275 – 5638
Thank you for your comments in support of the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
I am in favor of seeing the bridge built for the Crosstown Parkway over the St. Lucie River, in Port St. Lucie, as soon as possible to US Highway 1. I feel that the need has been there for years. I would like to see it to connect to an existing intersection. Thomas S. Ladomirak
From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 10:53 AM
To: alice_tom_florida@prodigy.net
Cc: Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.myflorida.com; Benito.Cunill@dot.gov; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA)
Subject: RE: PSL Crosstown Bridge

Thank you for your comments in support of the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
I am Thomas S. Ladomirak would like to see the Crosstown Bridge completed to US Hwy 1 in Port St. Lucie as soon as it can be built. I think the need is there now. Thank You.
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida. We appreciate the perspective that you can provide as someone who was very involved with the earlier project studies.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Dear Ms. Kendall,

Back in the early 1990's, a project that I was involved with as the Mayor of PSL at that time, was discussed, as to the future of an East-West road over the St. Lucie River. The project was to start at Virginia Ave., curve south and have an elevated "fly-over" going over the St. Lucie River and Veterans Parkway and emptying on Veterans Parkway eastbound into Walton Road, which has already been expanded. This would lessen the impact on Village Green Dr. Industrial Park area, (jobs etc.)

The westbound approach would be ground level. It was indicated at that time that the route would have less environmental impact on the area. As you are aware, the Crosstown Parkway continues on to Virginia Ave., So the continuation would be a smooth transition. Currently, the permitting, planning and funding should be explored in depth. Our debt level as a city should indicate caution as we proceed. I would be more than glad to sit and discuss this with you at your convenience.

Respectfully,

James Lawless- Former Mayor of PSL, as well as City Council and a co-founder of the Chamber of Commerce of Port St Lucie.

Telephone No. Home is 466-2202, and cell is 772-359-9516
Mr. Charles Lee  
Director of Advocacy  
Audubon Florida  
1101 Audubon Way  
Maitland, Florida 32751

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you for your October 29, 2013 letter that you sent on behalf of Audubon Florida to Mr. Victor Mendez, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Your letter was forwarded to our office, the FHWA Florida Division, for a response. In your letter, you asked that FHWA abandon and withdraw federal funding from this project, citing natural resource concerns and conflicts with Federal laws.

The Federal-aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the FHWA is working with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

From our perspective, the City clearly values the environmental features and ecosystems that exist within their city as demonstrated by their original conveyance of the property to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Throughout the EIS process, the City has worked with FDOT and the resource agencies to try and come up with methods to avoid, minimize and mitigate for natural resource impacts that will result from the project, while still meeting the needs of the people living in the community and not causing an overall harm to the very residents for whom the project is intended to provide benefit.

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and
feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and is working with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS). Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project. By copy of this letter, we are providing your concerns to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please contact Ms. Cathy Kendall, Environmental Specialist, with our office at cathy.kendall@dot.gov. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

FOR: James Christian, P.E.
Division Administrator

cc: Beatriz Caicedo, FDOT District 4 w/attachment
    Marjorie Bixby, FDOT CEMO w/attachment
    Michael Lamprecht, FHWA HEPE-20
October 29, 2013

Victor M. Mendez
Administrator,
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, City of Port St. Lucie

Dear Administrator Mendez:

Audubon Florida, the state’s oldest and largest conservation organization, comments on the EIS and the proposed project and requests action by FHWA to abandon and withdraw federal funding from this project.

This proposed facility would occupy lands that are part of the Halpatikee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve, the North Fork of the St. Luce River which comprises a State Aquatic Preserve, including Evans Creek.

A federal highway facility, or federally funded highway project that crosses these parklands and destroys natural resources within them presents conflicts with Section 4F of the Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. §303 and 23 U.S.C. §138.

The project also crosses the St. Lucie River at a location immediately adjacent to an important wildlife sanctuary owned by the Florida Audubon Society, Inc. The natural areas that would be impacted by this highway are of vital importance to a large number of species of migratory birds which transit the Eastern Flyway.

Numerous species are listed as Species of Special Concern, Threatened, or Endangered. Please see the complete list of protected species catalogued for the lands to be impacted by this project, which can be found at: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/sites/northfork/pub/NF_Listed_Species.pdf

Audubon Florida objects to this project and urges you to decline further federal funding.

Sincerely,

Charles Lee
Director of Advocacy
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Thank you, also, for including the open letter from Shari Anker.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

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If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
To my old friends and new:
I am passing this on, my remarks and letter are at the end of the page. Please support this issue many voices are needed as politicians are deaf

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO PEOPLE IN YOUR CONTACT LIST. ANY HOPE TO SAVE STATE PARKS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS.
PLEASE ACT NOW.

AN OPEN LETTER FROM SHARI ANKER

We at the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County are urging you to contact Cathy Kendall today at Florida's DOT to tell her it's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge. Two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation. December 30th is the last day for the public to submit comments.
Your timing is critical.
Her email address is: cathy.kendall@dot.gov

Dear Cathy;
It does not take a genius to understand that we do not need another bridge in this area, or that what makes Florida special is our ocean and aquatic life. What we destroy took eons of time to create and its loss will be enduring, and will lessen our quality of life here in Florida. Half the population here is retired, where are they in such a hurry to go? I am sure with out reserve that money would be better spend maintaining the roads and bridges we already have.
It is my understanding that fishing, clamming, and lobstering are mainstays of the economics of our coast, anything done to destroy or lessen it is an affront to the people who elected you to protect their interests, please keep this in mind.

Here's the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:

* The destruction of Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve
* Degradation of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.
* Air, water, and noise pollution in a pristine and serene area
We're hoping that as the environmental community rallied around stopping golf courses and resorts in our State Preserve, we can stop bridges through them as well.
Gloria J. Lister
gjdonatelli@aol.com
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

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If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
Dear Ms. Kendall:

We believe that current proposed location the Crosstown Parkway Bridge through existing state conservation land is the wrong location.

Monetary, Ecological, and Historical Costs for Halpatiokee Bridge Route

1. Paying to Lose

State conservation funds from the Preservation 2000 program were used to purchase what is now called the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve. City taxpayers have also funded the engineering firm of Keith & Schnars $4, 658,609 to date, in large part to attempt an a fait accompli case for the selection of the Halpatiokee and Aquatic Preserve areas as the best option for the City, among six build alternatives and one no-build alternative. The City is on record as preferring this route for over two decades. After the bridge’s construction, taxpayers will have lost the value of this area as a pristine conserved section of the Savannas State Preserve, as well as the widest buffer of the Aquatic Preserve. Current water quality problems in the area would be greatly increased. Sedimentation from bridge construction would increase water quality problems. Increase runoff from roadways would cause additional pollution.

2. Double-Dipping to Build Infrastructure

Although losing ownership of this area by selling it to the state, the City’s officials planned well in advance to regain use of it to build the bridge they had long had in mind. Just one aspect of this plan was the Memorandum of Understanding the City entered into with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 2010, well in advance of the so-called public input regarding the route selection.

3. A Critical Precedent Making Way for a Free for All

If Federal and State agencies allow the City to build a bridge through state preserves, a precedent could be established in which a free for all climate will endanger every single preserved area in the state. Cities and other entities will learn from the Keith & Schnars template about how to overcome legal, environmental, and community objections to build infrastructure anywhere they please. Tactics such as de-federalizing and segmenting into phases for easier approval will become the norm, and once again, the taxpayers will be sold something they did not buy. We strongly object to the loss of state land set aside for conservation.

4. Abandonment of the Overton Park Supreme Court Ruling (1971) & Highway Transportation Act: Following the Law Is Cheaper

Federal law clearly states that when considering a highway project that would use the land of a park or wildlife refuge that viable alternatives must be chosen over any route through these protected areas. Only if no feasible alternative exists can consideration be given to protected land, and even with that possibility great efforts must be made to minimize harm. The City examined six build alternatives and chose the very
one with the highest, most irreversible ecological impact. Other truly viable alternatives exist, especially Route 6A, which would cause **zero impacts** to the Halpatiokee area of Savannas Preserve, fewer impacts to the Aquatic Preserve, far fewer impacts to listed species, and **cost $35 million less** than the Halpatiokee selection.

5. Abandonment of Legal Definition & Application of State “Preserved” Lands

According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection a state preserve is “designed to save representative samples, of various size, of natural conditions of Florida.” In managing state preserves “preservation of … conditions must be given priority over any other user considerations,” and that passive use is the goal. Building a six-lane bridge through Halpatiokee and the Aquatic Buffer will not save either system’s natural conditions. Building a bridge with its ensuing traffic crossing is clearly not passive use, rendering the distinction of Preserve invalid. Such action invites legal response to re-establish the intended meaning of the classification.

6. Ruination of Halpatiokee and Degradation of Aquatic Preserve Ecosystems

Amongst ecologists and old-timers this area is of exceptionally high ecological value. In a relatively small area can be found a wide diversity of ecosystems: various uplands and wetland ecosystems including pine scrub, one of the last sand ridge habitats in Port St. Lucie, creeklands, mangrove swamps, and estuarine ecosystems. Especially remarkable and unique for the area is the retention of ecosystem integrity and function, in large part due to the “pristine” and undisturbed nature of the area. The water is the cleanest here, and exotic intrusion is minimal in the central areas. Both threatened and endangered native animals and plants find the area quite hospitable. For example, manatees, river otters, and opossum pipefish swim by, at least one eagles’ nest is active, wood storks forage here, snail kites soar above, and exciting plants like the Florida orchid, Rose Pogonia, nodding pinweed, cardinal air plant, and the largeflower false rosemary are discovered routinely. Three varieties of native blueberries exist here.

Building a six-lane bridge through this small area will have devastating consequences. They include:

- a. The initial degradation and ultimate ruination of the 18-acre Halpatiokee Trails area of the Savannas Preserve. The area will be immediately damaged by construction activities, and once the bridge is built will receive no sun or rain in the central, most ecologically viable and diverse sections. Wetlands will not be re-hydrated. The historic Black Creek will run no more.
- b. Large areas of mangroves and native Florida vegetation will be torn out in both Preserves.
- c. Because of the tremendous degradation threatened and endangered species will be without their required habitats. Other important but non-protected species will be deprived of habitats and food. Specie diversity will plummet.
- d. During the lengthy construction process, which will include the driving of pilings, we expect great disturbance in the aquatic ecosystems, from river bed alterations and increased turbidity, specifically, and, in general, the altered habitat conditions the species are accustomed to and depend upon. Once the bridge is built sections of the forested area of the Aquatic Preserve as well as River and Creek areas will be shaded.
- e. The pristine nature will be lost due to pollution. Vehicle emissions will pollute the air and water. Voluminous litter from passing motorists will fall on land and water alike. And, although the City plans to build retention ponds on both sides of the bridge crossing, we still expect run-off pollutants to find their way into the watershed.
- f. The variety of machines used in construction will also add air and water pollution, including noise and vibration effects.
- g. Light and noise pollution both during construction and once traffic begins to cross the River will permanently alter not only the flora and fauna constitution of the Preserves, but its aesthetic value as well.

7. Loss of Ecosystem Services & Protection in an Ecologically Imperiled World
It is now recognized that intact, specie diverse, healthy and well-functioning ecosystems provide a number of vital services important to human health and well-being. With the ruination of Halpatiokee Trails and the degradation of the Aquatic Preserve we will lose functions such as the cleansing of air and water, the replenishment of ground water, carbon sequestration, and fish nursery that it has been providing us. But we will also lose the Preserves as critical back-up for our area’s degrading ecosystems – aquatic and terrestrial. Preserving this area will insure that it remains a repository of imperiled, threatened, and endangered species as tipping points in surrounding ecosystems are reached. The sudden loss of sea grass and sick and dying manatees in the Northern area of our Indian River Lagoon is but one example. The St. Lucie River is part of the Indian River Lagoon’s watershed. The St. Lucie River and its estuary are also greatly stressed. Because we live in an era of climate change and accelerated ecological degradation, all efforts must be made to protect any healthier ecosystems like the Halpatiokee and the Aquatic Preserves, with their accompanying and vitally important specie diversity.

8. Loss of Historical Significance

Port St. Lucie lost over 85 square miles of its original native Florida landscape when General Development Corporation bulldozed it to prepare for development. The Halpatiokee Trails section is the only remaining area accessible from US1 that houses the flora and fauna along the banks of Evans Creek and the St. Lucie River that the local legendary pioneer, Ernest F. Lyons, wrote so lovingly about, and for which he received many awards. It is the only area with the original ambience of his “Rio de Luz” intact, the only area that our young residents can imagine what Ernie’s magical world was like.

Our group strongly opposes this location for a bridge. We believe it sets a dangerous precedent of taking away designated conservation land and will greatly increased already severe water quality problems in this area. It may also take away habitat from endangered and threatened species, both Federal and State protected species.

Please contact me to let me know that you have received my comments.

Sincerely yours,

Drew Martin
Conservation Chair, Loxahatchee Group, Sierra Club
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Dear Ms. Kendall,

I urge you to stop putting more bridges or roads over natural areas in St. Lucie County, in particular at this time the Savannas and St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve. Why? Because this county, and this state of Florida, need as few disruptions as possible to safeguard and help clean-up the sad condition of the watersheds. I would not have bought in Florida 7 years ago if I had understood the impact of development on this beautiful state with such unusual habitats. Now, I want to help preserve what is left.

Thank you,
Cheryl McCormick
1802 Mariner Bay Blvd
34949
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225
Ms. Kendall,

I am very concerned about the proposed bridge to be located in St. Lucie County, between the existing Port St. Lucie Blvd. Bridge, and the Prima Vista Bridge. It is my understanding that the proposed bridge would adversely affect both the Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve.

To the extent that we add more concrete and hard, non porous structures to this critically endangered area, I believe that we contribute to the already imperiled St. Lucie River system, thereby further contributing to the degradation of the Indian River Lagoon.

I am very much against this proposed bridge and believe that it is not in the best interest of the community.

Thank you,

Daniel J. McCormick
323 Leeward Ln
No. 204
Ft. Pierce, FL 34949
CROSSTOWN PARKWAY

Robert Minsky, Port St. Lucie

Environmentalists avoid question

I was asked to write a column about a lawsuit regarding the completion of the Crosstown Parkway that was filed on behalf of Port St. Lucie! It seems that the Crosstown Parkway, which was approved in 2010, has run into all sorts of problems. In particular, the project has been delayed and there have been numerous legal challenges. The legal challenges have been so expensive that the project is now more than twice the original cost and may not be completed for another year. The project has been delayed due to a lack of funds and a lawsuit that has been filed by environmentalists. The lawsuit alleges that the project violates the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Gerry Villeneuve, Vero Beach

Legal consequences needed to be stricter

It seems to me that columnist Rich Campbell does not get the message he is trying to relate to the public. He states in his column how it is distracting and costly for drivers trying to avoid driving and admits that he still does not do so. He also states that he has no cell phone and that the vehicle is driving the bullet. However, driving while texting should be a primary and not secondary offense. The reason the law has not been strengthened is that cell phone lobbyists have been very powerful in control of our politicians. I think it is time for me to just do it and then explain the consequences of his or her actions. I, as well as many others, am dissatisfied with the way our system works or by the way our system does not work.

Harold H. “Buzz” Smyth, Port St. Lucie

Wrecking balls hits landmark

I watched the other day as a piece of my history was erased from the earth — no article in the paper, no protest to save this historic structure. What is wrong here? If three council members have not violated the state's open meetings law and (if found not guilty), then, perhaps, the state should pay their legal fees. If not, then let them pay their own way, like everyone else has.

Pelicans ... 
Claus Sweet, Port St. Lucie

Forget Scr approves, think Positive

On Dec. 1, an ugly Scr approves appeared in our newspaper airing the dirty laundry of Port St. Lucie (rehash of local controversies). Brace yourself now for a visit from the Positive Christmas Dwarf, coming to the table shouting, “Look at all the positive things that make Port St. Lucie a special place — that bring snowbirds and newcomers.” Here are a few:

The Crosstown Parkway (makes traveling west a pleasure).

The Botanical Gardens (perfect for jazz concerts, catering events and garden walks).

The Civic Center (great festivals and activities for young and old).

The developer is due for a new name.

The Research Center.

The new Bass Bop Shops.

Burlington Coat Factory.

That’s just to mention a few.

Kate Urban, Port St. Lucie

Be proud of new dog park

I have been blown away by the addition of the Lyngate Dog Park. I was so excited to learn there was finally in Port St. Lucie a place where I could take my dogs to socialize with other friendly pets.

The park is beautiful — very clean and well-manicured. The thought and effort that went into it is evident. The fences are high and sturdy; there are plenty of shady patches for canines and alike, and there is even a water fountain for the dogs.

I really appreciate that members of City Council, as well as our parks and recreation department, have taken the time to build such an awesome retreat for local canine owners.

This is really an attractive amenity for the city and will surely be enjoyed by all.

JUDE RAY

Roy Brewer, Port St. Lucie

Stop fighting against progress

In the past, a group has fought against any type of industry coming into St. Lucie County and creating jobs. Example: A power plant that burns coal would have created many local jobs in its construction, and permanent jobs would have come after completion. This would have made the county a focal point of the area. All we heard was, “Not in my backyard.”

Thanks to these concerned citizens, there are few part-time or full-time jobs in our area. Now we’re hearing of a Crosstown bridge to be built. Already some citizens are voicing their concerns over how it will affect local habitat. I really believe that those involved in planning the bridge are well aware of their responsibilities to the county, state and federal guidelines, and that everything will be kept in mind.

Building the bridge would mean jobs, short-term or long-term. Speaking of jobs, what about hiring a veteran? Attending school is one thing but a job can support a family.

Regardless, let’s pray the contractor will hire from our area.
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
DEAR MS KENDALL,

I AM SENDING THIS E-MAIL BECAUSE I THINK THE CROSSTOWN PARKWAY BRIDGE WILL HAVE A DEVASTING IMPACT ON THE STATE PARK LANDS AND THE WILD LIFE IT SUPPORTS. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY I'M AGAINST THIS PROPOSED ACTION. IF THE BRIDGE IS NECESSARY PLEASE LOOK FOR AN ALTERNATE SITE. THANK YOU

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JAMES MURANELLI
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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cathy.kendall@dot.gov
"Here's the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:
* The destruction of **Halpatiokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve**
* Degradation of the **North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve**
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.
* Air, water, and noise pollution in a pristine and serene area

We're hoping that as the environmental community rallied around stopping golf courses and resorts in our State Preserve, we can stop bridges through them as well."

How could you imagine this would be a good plan?
Maybe you should pan out a little from whatever the immediate focus of your agenda might be, have a look at some of the future consequences that are less than rosy, and try re-assessing your plan based on the way it actually impacts the whole.
Quick fixes cause environmental tragedies. Environmental tragedies have far-reaching effects that are accumulative and progressively more and more unmanageable.
It's obvious, it's proven by history, etc.
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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How is it possible for this city and managers to start a major project, the Crosstown Parkway, and "tell and sell" the residents that the Crosstown will connect to US 1 and a bridge, and eventually reduce traffic on US1, and make access to Hutchinson Island faster, and provide a safer escape route back to the mainland. So the parkway gets built.

The Crosstown Parkway Bridge is not yet approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The city expects approval in 2014.

The public comment process, and effects of the environmental impact study are not complete? What if the extension does not get the green light, or if the money is not available, or public opinion has changed.

Is this how city managers plan and manage a project? Pathetic!
Yes, we need another bridge. I urge you to build one. Get the studies done.

The other bridges have only helped our community. Traffic is faster and more scenic. We save gas. Increased safety should a major storm hit the area. Improves fishing as it provides protection for many species, and hopefully, includes resident and tourism spots, to take pictures, fish, provide a place to launch boats even a beach to swim.

Bob Poller, 373 N W Shoreview, 34986  772 343 7369
From: Alian, Morteza  
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2013 9:36 AM  
To: Caicedo, Beatriz  
Subject: Fwd: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, Port St Lucie, FL

Here set the letters.

Thanks.

Morteza Alian  
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Bob Post" <postonno@yahoo.com>  
To: "morteza.alian@dot.myflorida.com" <morteza.alian@dot.myflorida.com>, "info@conservationallianceslc.org" <info@conservationallianceslc.org>  
Subject: Crosstown Parkway Bridge, Port St Lucie, FL

Beatriz Caicedo's website redirected me to you in her absence. Please review the attached information concerning the proposed bridge location.

Thank you!

Bob Post

From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]  
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2013 12:08 PM  
To: postonno@yahoo.com  
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov  
Subject: RE: Port St. Lucie FL Crosstown Expressway River Crossing

Thank you for providing a copy of a letter, newspaper article and page excerpt regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).
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545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Bob Post [mailto:postonno@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, December 29, 2013 12:52 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Cc: Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl; Info@consalliancslc.org
Subject: Port St. Lucie FL Crosstown Expressway River Crossing

Please review and consider the information therein regarding location 1-C, as proposed by the City of Port St Lucie, FL.

Thank you.
Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov

December 27, 2013

Re: Crosstown Parkway/St. Lucie River crossing
   Financial Project # 410844-AB-1-01; Federal Aid Project # 7777-087-A

Dear Ms. Kendall:

My name is Onno Robert (Bob) Post. My family and I have resided in Port St Lucie, FL, for 45 years, and are in our 34th year at 1175 SE Coral Reef Street. I provide this information so that you know a bit about who we are. Obviously, I have a personal interest in the choice of location 1-C, which must cross two bodies of water and a large wetland peninsula, and through the Halpatiokee State Preserve.

I doubt that there is anyone who is more aware of the environmental damage to animal life that will be caused by the construction of this bridge at this location. I am a native Floridian, an avid fisherman, and a serious amateur photographer. I have spent thousands of hours on the North Fork of the St. Lucie.

The North Coral Reef waterway passes our home, and terminates into a small lake-like body. The waters are separated from the main river channel by a large peninsula, comprised mainly of mangroves, cabbage palms, oak trees, huge ferns, wild orchids, and other native plant species.

With the continuous growth of Port St Lucie, animal species have been squeezed into smaller and smaller spaces. Raccoons, opossums, alligators, and many, many bird species have come to occupy the peninsula, fleeing the never-ending development.

West Indian Manatees cruise up and down the waterway, munching on low-hanging mangrove leaves. Calves sometimes accompany their mothers. Usually traveling in groups of 3 or 4, they enjoy the safety of this area, away from the terror of fast-moving boats on the main river. Playful River Otters show up, sometimes coming up with a fish.

There seems to be no limit to the variety of both fresh and saltwater fish that move in and out of these waters, depending on the salinity. Over the years, porpoises have visited, as have spinner sharks, in schools. During my many years of fishing both off our dock and around the mangroves to the north, I have caught mangrove snapper, redfish, sheepshead, jack crevalle, small grouper, snook, tarpon, mullet, pilchards, sand perch, majorra, redfish, trout, both hard-head and gaff topsail catfish, whiting, blue crabs and river shrimp. During drier times its not unusual to catch largemouth bass, crappie, freshwater catfish, bream, garfish, mudfish, and freshwater eels, to name a few. I have never found another area of the St Lucie that offers such a variety.

I have no doubt that several saltwater species use this brackish water as a spawning ground. I’ve seen mullet and snook as small as 3”, 4” mangrove snapper, and tiny blue crabs. The mangroves and protected waterway provide the perfect environment for their life cycle.
By selecting 1-C, the environmental impact will be disastrous. I do not agree with the limited studies provided by the engineering firms with all their charts and computers. Lights will burn all night, and the traffic noise and vibration will carry a great distance both north and south.

In 1989, the City spent $300,000 of taxpayer dollars on a study by Keith & Schnars on this issue. NOT ONE STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY SUPPORTED THE WEST VIRGINIA CROSSING; this included the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Florida DEP, and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. Serious environmental damage concerns far outweighed the possible need for the project. Most predictions were that Port St Lucie would grow to the west, across I-95, and needs for an additional river crossing would not justify environmental impact or the expense. Those predictions have proven true, with the development of Tradition and St. Lucie West. A more recent study by Keith & Schnars, (attached) continues to show that the 1-C route is clearly the most environmentally damaging as well as the most costly.

And speaking of costs-- the City spent $40,000 on an ad campaign, with a special referendum, to determine the “will of the people”. Misinformation as to the results was published in the *News Tribune*, stating that 89% of the population had voted in support of the bridge. Some quick research showed that only about 12% of the registered voters at that time even voted! Unfortunately, this misinformation may have has found its way into documents justifying the bridge as to the people’s will. I attach a copy of my rebuttal of August 23, 20102, correcting the erroneous reporting.

No other area of the North Fork of the St Lucie River provides such a habitat for plants, animals, birds and fish. This is an environmental disaster on a fast track. Mitigation has been proposed as the solution. Not possible! Not possible to re-create or replace this unique place along our precious St Lucie River.

It is not possible to interview the plants and animals involved. When they do provide answers to a project like this, it is years, or even decades later...way too late!

Sincerely,

Bob Post

cc: Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl

cc: Info@consalliancslc.org
NORTH FORK
Story vastly overstates support for bridge

On Aug. 17, the News-Tribune ran a front-page article regarding the proposed bridge over the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

Reporter Alexi Howk quoted Vice Mayor Jack Kelly saying, “Eighty-nine percent of the people in this city voted to tax themselves for this bridge.”

Either the reporter misunderstood Mr. Kelly, or Mr. Kelly misspoke. In either event, the information is grossly misstated, and needs to be corrected, since such information often finds its way into official documents and becomes assumed as truth. Perhaps worse, the uninformed public, over which the paper holds great sway, relies on the media to provide accurate and truthful information.

A special referendum on the proposed bond issue to finance the bridge was held on June 7, 2005. At that time, our population was conservatively estimated at 100,000. There were 75,492 registered voters in the city at the time of the referendum, and a total of 12,285 votes were cast. Votes in favor: 10,596; votes against: 1,629.

Thus, only 13.5 percent of the people in this city voted in favor of the bond issue, not the 89 percent. Note that only 12 percent of the entire estimated population voted, and only 14 percent of the registered electorate.

Prior to the actual vote, the city appropriated $40,000 of your taxes to run a campaign to persuade you, the taxpayer, to vote yourselves a tax increase to finance the bond issue. The city bought votes for $4 each. Consider also the effort and energy spent by city staff and administration promulgating the issue.

And so, at this time, our city fathers have spent our tax dollars, and have a mandate from 13.5 percent of the population to borrow a huge sum of money, with interest to be repaid by us, the taxpayers.

Bob Post
Port St. Lucie
# Alternatives Evaluation Matrix

## Tier 2 Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>1C</th>
<th>1F</th>
<th>2A</th>
<th>2D</th>
<th>6A</th>
<th>6B</th>
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### Traffic Service

**Traffic (YR 2034)**

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<th>Daily Forecast - 2034</th>
<th>56,400</th>
<th>47,350</th>
<th>61,100</th>
<th>39,900</th>
<th>42,300</th>
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<td>Alternative LOS</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic Diversion from Prima Vista (%)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic Diversion from Port St. Lucie (%)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
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### Social Environment

**Residential Impacts**

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<th>Developed Lots</th>
<th>72</th>
<th>93</th>
<th>95</th>
<th>102</th>
<th>97</th>
<th>97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Lots</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Residential Impacts</strong></td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>152</td>
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<td>145</td>
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</table>

**Commercial Impacts**

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<th>Developed Lots</th>
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<th>0</th>
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<td>Undeveloped Lots</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Commercial Impacts</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Community Facilities Impacts**

| Parks | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Schools / Churches / Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **Total Community Impacts** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

### Natural Environment

**Public Land Impacts (acres)**

| Wetland Habitats | 7.04 | 5.31 | 5.54 | 5.54 | 0 | 3.54 |
| Upland Habitats  | 4.43 | 2.02 | 4.88 | 4.88 | 0 | 1.48 |
| **Total State Park Lands** | 11.47 | 7.33 | 10.42 | 10.42 | 0 | 5.02 |

**Sovereignty Submerged Lands**

| 1.66 | 1.02 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.8 | 1.58 |
| **Total Public Lands** | 13.13 | 8.35 | 12.42 | 12.42 | 0.8 | 6.6 |

**Private Land Impacts (acres)**

| Wetland Habitats (Within River Corridor) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.87 | 0 |
| Upland Habitats (Within River Corridor) | 0 | 1.05 | 0 | 0 | 3.1 | 0 |
| **Total Private Natural Land Impacts** | 0 | 1.05 | 0 | 0 | 8.97 | 0 |

**T&E Species Potential**

| High | Med | High | High | Med | Med |

**Habitat Types Impacted**

| Total Wetlands | 7.04 | 5.31 | 5.54 | 5.54 | 5.87 | 3.54 |
| Total Natural Uplands | 4.43 | 3.07 | 4.88 | 4.88 | 3.1 | 1.48 |

### Costs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Construction (in millions)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>119.40</td>
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</table>
From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov

Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 4:56 PM

To: chrispozgar351@msn.com
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA); Benito.Cunill@dot.gov

Subject: RE: The Saint Lucie River Bridge

Thank you for your additional comments. I am copying FDOT on your comments and including the comments as part of the administrative record.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: chris pozgar 

Sent: Friday, December 13, 2013 6:45 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Re: The Saint Lucie River Bridge

Cathy,
Thank you for your response. There is only one area that I know of that needs a Bridge/causeway. It would be in Brevard county. Brevards city of Palm Bay has the largest town with the biggest population and also the most land and it has no access to the beaches. The distance between causeways is ridiculous. 192 in Melbourne going south to Wabasso bridge in Indian River county has no causeway!?? I always wonder how on earth Brevard can or would deny their largest population access to the beach? Brevard Counties economy warrants such a project. But as usual special interests make the rules. Sad.

Best regards, Chris

Sent from my iPad

From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov

Sent: Friday, December 13, 2013 5:11 PM

To: chrispozgar351@msn.com
Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Benito.Cunill@dot.gov; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA)

Subject: RE: The Saint Lucie River Bridge

Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for
this project, and it is FHWA's assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: chris pozgar [mailto:chrispozgar351@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2013 6:00 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: The Saint Lucie River Bridge

Cathy,

Please don't build a bridge in areas set aside for preservation. We have enough problems with the our waterways. Why would we create these preserves and then be so ass backward to impact them in this way? The areas weren't created for a bridge. Please stop the insanity. We don't need any more bridges in this area.

Thank you, Chris Pozgar

Sent from my iPad
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

At the time of the public hearing that you attended, FHWA had not identified a preferred alternative for the project. It is the FHWA-Florida Division’s practice to hear responses from the public and other agencies prior to identifying a preferred alternative on a project that will likely have significant impacts. For this particular project, we obtained public feedback and coordinated with other agencies for approximately ten months prior to doing so, considering many issues, including the issue of cost that you have mentioned.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
Hello Cathy,

I was given your contact information from a neighbor. My name is Paul Raymond and I live at 1249 SE Coral Reef St. in Port Saint Lucie, Fl. I have a question as to why or who would have made the decision on the location for the bridge. I went to the meeting in September of 2011 and saw very large pictures of the six choices. Beside each picture were statistics on cost and environmental impact, along with other info. Everyone knew that the choice was made because the homes were purchased. An engineer at the meeting told me that this was a procedural meeting that needed to take place to satisfy state guidelines. I would like to know why a decision was made that was not either the cheapest or the least environmental impact. I am not saying that I am against a bridge. I only question why in this day and age we are not trying to save money if possible while also causing less of an impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

Paul Raymond
Thank you for forwarding comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Cheryl McCormick <cherylmccormick@gmail.com>
To: Dyana Boyd Voss <conservationallianceslc@gmail.com>

If you want to stop the cutting into this state's natural areas and help clean-up the watersheds, perhaps a note from you to Ms. Kendall will help.

Thank you,
Cheryl

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Dyanaboyd voss <dyanaboydvoss@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Dec 8, 2013 at 1:50 PM
Subject: It's not OK. And your favorite State Preserve could be next.
To: Dyana Boyd Voss <conservationallianceslc@gmail.com>

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO PEOPLE IN YOUR CONTACT LIST. ANY HOPE TO SAVE STATE PARKS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS.
PLEASE ACT NOW.
AN OPEN LETTER FROM SHARI ANKER

We at the Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County are urging you to contact Cathy Kendall today at Florida's DOT to tell her it's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge. Two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation.
December 30th is the last day for the public to submit comments.
Your timing is critical.
Her email address is: cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Here’s the short list of impacts to this environmentally sensitive area:
* The destruction of Halpatriokee Trails section of Savannas State Preserve
* Degradation of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve
* Loss of critical wetlands, mangroves, and submerged vegetation essential to the St. Lucie River, its Estuary, and the Indian River Lagoon
* Further endangerment of at least 60 at-risk species, including 33 birds in the Aquatic Preserve. Loss of hundreds of species in seven ecosystems in Halpatiokee Trails
* The likely disruption of the migratory routes of birds traversing the Eastern Flyway; this area is a stop over site.
* Air, water, and noise pollution in a pristine and serene area

We’re hoping that as the environmental community rallied around stopping golf courses and resorts in our State Preserve, we can stop bridges through them as well.

Please like our Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/ConservationAllianceofStLucieCo
Twitter address:
https://twitter.com/ConservationSLC
Linked In address:
Conservation Alliance of SLC

We are deeply grateful to all who take a moment out of busy schedules to submit comments. Have a joyous holiday season.

POST FROM CAPT. DON VOSS, MARINE CLEANUP INITIATIVE
The smile (as seen in the above photo) off the north fork of the St Lucie River in the center is Evans Creek off US 1 in Port St Lucie. To the left side is Port St Lucie Blvd Bridge and to the right side is the Prima Vista Bridge... about two miles apart. The Tradition's Community (West of the housing to the top of the photo) wants another bridge right through the center of the smile of Evans Creek. Evans creek and the small amount of trees visible is the only portion of the Halpatiokee Wetlands Preserve left in the city of Port St Lucie as the rest has been built over. Every house seen above the river used to be land that filtered the storm water before it ran into the North Fork. So, when people clamor about "Save Our Rivers" and "Stop the discharges" they need to understand...every time Port St Lucie and St Lucie County allows another blacktop surface or building, they have polluted the river even more. Discharges that started in May 2013 did not affect the estuary until July 2013 because of all the storm water coming from the canals and the St Lucie River's overtaxed the flow. The additional water directed into the North Fork through another bridge will further blow up this problem. Don't the bridges pictured seem to be sufficient?
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

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If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP  
Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
As I now feel informed about the Port Saint Lucie Crosstown bridge, there is no way I can understand why there is any realistic reason to approve a route, through two public parks paid for with public taxes?? Such an approval is stupid, ignorant, and foolish to the extreme. Has the Corps approved such a route? Floridians need to know?

Lowell Sasser
3124 McNeil Rd.
Ft. Pierce, FL 34981
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA's assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

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Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA – FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Dear Ms. Kendall,

The history of Florida is full of awful stories of how misguided development permanently destroyed our gifts of nature.

It's not okay to degrade and destroy two State Preserves to build a bridge, using two State Preserves that were purchased with taxpayer funds allotted for conservation.

Marilyn Silver
772-466-1000
Dear Mr. Strayer,

This is regarding your inquiry about the subject project and a bridge on US 1. From a traffic control perspective, grade-separated flyover ramps are typically considered in situations where at-grade solutions are not effective (for example, very high volumes of crossing traffic flows that result in congestion which has become so severe that it causes the system to completely breakdown).

Roadway congestion is commonly measured by Levels of Service (LOS) with grades from A being the best to F being the worst. Breakdown conditions would be considered LOS F.

Grade-separated ramps are usually used where one of the roadways is a freeway or highly controlled roadway (i.e. an interchange on I-95).
There are instances where grade separation might be considered for two arterial roads when the congestion is extremely severe (LOS F).
These solutions require more right or way, and have a higher construction cost than at-grade intersections, therefore, they are used carefully and only when the impact and cost can be justified by the benefit.

As noted in the FEIS, the Level of Service for US-1 between Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Prima Vista Boulevard, assuming the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension is built, is projected to operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS D or better). As such, grade separation was not deemed to be necessary as part of this study.

Thank you for your interest in this project.
Sincerely.
Beatriz

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, CPM
Consultant Management
FDOT District Four
3400 West Commercial Blvd.
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33309-3421
Telephone: 954 777 4336

Mr. Strayer,

Thank you for your question regarding the Crosstown Parkway Extension project.
I am forwarding your question to Beatriz Caicedo, the Project Manager with the Florida Department of Transportation. She will know the latest proposals related to the more specific preliminary design aspects of the project. The project cannot proceed to final design until after the environmental process, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, is completed.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225

cathy.kendall@dot.gov

From: Ed Strayer [mailto:edsak60@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2013 6:01 PM
To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
Subject: Port St. Lucie expects final federal approval for Crosstown Parkway Bridge in early 2014

Hi,

I have one question. Will there a bridge on US 1 so that north bound traffic does not need to make a left turn at a traffic signal?

Thanks,

Ed Strayer

Port St Lucie
From: Barb Swain [mailto:bsladypro@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2013 5:32 PM
To: Caicedo, Beatriz
Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway

Yes, please, I would like to be in touch with the PD & E Study program. Have they ever spent time on our street or in our neighborhood? The noise is only going to get worse.

Thank you
Barbara and Jerry Swain

> From: Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us
> To: bsladypro@hotmail.com
> CC: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov
> Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway
> Date: Tue, 17 Dec 2013 15:36:30 +0000
> 
> Dear Mr. and Ms. Swain,
> 
> This is regarding your suggestion for the Crosstown Parkway Extension. Based on the information from the City, and according to the preliminary drawings, all roadway improvements will be within the existing right-of-way including the west side of Floresta south of the proposed Crosstown Parkway. Therefore, the City is not taking any additional right of way from your property for this project. Also, as part of the PD&E Study a noise study was performed. The study does not identify a noise wall in the vicinity of your property.
> 
> If you need further clarification, you can contact me or Frank Knott, City Project Manager, at FKnot@cityofpsl.com.
> 
> Sincerely,
> Beatriz
> 
> Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, CPM
> Consultant Management
> FDOT District Four
> 3400 West Commercial Blvd.
> Ft Lauderdale, Fl 33309-3421
> Telephone: 954 777 4336
> 
> > -----Original Message-----
> > From: Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov [mailto:Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov]
> > Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 10:48 AM
> > To: bsladypro@hotmail.com
> > Cc: Caicedo, Beatriz; Benito.Cunill@dot.gov; Brunelle, Karen (FHWA)
> > Subject: RE: Crosstown Parkway
> > 
> > Thank you for your questions regarding the Crosstown Parkway Extension project. Preliminary design on the project has been done as part of the Environmental Impact
Statement to assess the anticipated impacts of the project. The project cannot proceed to final design until after the environmental process is complete. In the meantime, I am copying Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT Project Manager. She can provide you with information related to the preliminary design proposals that can address your questions related to the anticipated right-of-way acquisitions and locations of noise walls.

> Cathy Kendall, AICP
> Senior Environmental Specialist
> FHWA - FL, PR and VI
> 545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
> Tallahassee, FL 32303
> (850) 553-2225
> cathy.kendall@dot.gov
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Barbara Swain [mailto:bsladypro@hotmail.com]
> Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2013 7:39 PM
> To: Kendall, Cathy (FHWA)
> Subject: Crosstown Parkway
>
> To Whom It May Concern:
>
> I have a suggestion for the continuation of the Crosstown Parkway......My husband and I live on the corner of Floresta and SE Albatross Ave. Our understanding is that the city will acquire the easement that is located on our property. Our suggestion is that instead of taking that small portion of property if the city could just move their plans of widening Floresta more to the EAST. Aren't they already taking the properties to the EAST? If so, what would it hurt to widen Floresta more to the EAST instead of interrupting our property. I understand it is owned by the city, but if you are already disrupting the entire properties to the EAST, then what is the need for ours to be disrupted. We are already burdened by the traffic on Floresta and even more so once the Parkway is finished. My husband's family purchased this property in 1980 and at the time was not aware of any Parkway at that time. We understand their is progress to be made, but the less disruption, the better.
>
> Also, is there going to be some type of wall built on either Floresta or Crosstown, preventing some of the highway traffic noise? Spend an evening in our home and you will see what we are talking about.
> >> Thank you for your time and consideration upon these two concerns.
>
> Jerry and Barbara Swain
> >> 772-971-6973
> >> bsladypro@hotmail.com
From: Caicedo, Beatriz  
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2013 10:58 AM  
To: 'Tom L.'  
Subject: RE: Next Public meeting on the crosstown parkway in Port St Lucie. 

Dear Mrs. Tom,

This is regarding your question about future public meetings for the subject project. The Crosstown Parkway Extension Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) phase is still under the approval process from the Federal Highway Administration. If the project is approved, then, the City of Port St. Lucie will announce this approval to the public. Then, the design phase will be next, and public meetings will be announced at that time. Please visit the City's web site: http://pslcrosstownparkway.com/community.html for further information. You can also contact me or Mr. Frank Knott, City Project Manager at FKnott@cityofpsl.com.

Sincerely,
Beatriz

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, CPM  
Consultant Management  
FDOT District Four  
3400 West Commercial Blvd.  
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33309-3421  
Telephone: 954 777 4336 

---

From: Tom L. [mailto:alice_tom_florida@prodigy.net]  
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2013 11:24 AM  
To: Caicedo, Beatriz  
Subject: Next Public meeting on the crosstown parkway in Port St Lucie.

I would like to know when the next meeting will be on the crosstown parkway in Port Saint Lucie, FL ??
Thank you for forwarding your letter to the editor of the local paper. We will include this information as part of the project record.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
cathy.kendall@dot.gov

Dear Editor:

Supreme Court Justice Marshall wrote in 1971 in the case of Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe, "The growing concern about the quality of our natural environment has prompted Congress in recent years to enact legislation designed to curb the accelerating destruction of our country's natural beauty."

The legislation referred to were the Department of Transportation Act (1968) and the Federal Aid Highway Act (1968). These two Acts, "prohibit the Secretary of Transportation from authorizing
the use of federal funds to finance the construction of highways through public parks if a ‘feasible and prudent’ alternative route exists.”

After many setbacks, the tenacious Citizens to Preserve Overton Park prevailed when the Supreme Court ruled in their favor, thus preventing a six-lane highway from running through their park.

The protection of parkland was given "paramount" importance in this case. Marshall again: "The few green havens that are public parks were not to be lost unless there were truly unusual factors present in a particular case or the cost of community disruption resulting from alternative routes reached extraordinary magnitudes."

Could there be a better example of what these laws and the Supreme Court intended to protect and what they were intended to prohibit than the controversial Crosstown Parkway Bridge in PSL?

Shari Anker, an inspirational leader in the fight to PRESERVE the uniqueness and beauty of our Savannas, recently urged residents to email Cathy Kendall at "Cathy.Kendall@dot.gov" and let her know that you too are opposed to the construction of the Crosstown Bridge and the destruction of a precious part of the Savannas, the Halpatiokee Park.

Sincerely,

Andrew Treacy
286-5055
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

The Federal-Aid Program is a federally-assisted, state-administered program. As such, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to finalize the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA classified the project as one that would require an EIS due to the anticipated significant impacts that would occur as a result of the project. Numerous alternatives have been studied as part of the EIS process for this project, and it is FHWA’s assessment that for any of the alternatives that could meet the need and purpose of the project, there would likely be significant impacts (whether to the natural environment, human environment or both).

Throughout the EIS process, FHWA has received feedback from the public and agencies regarding the project and the various alternatives considered. FHWA attended the September 22, 2011 public hearing and was able to hear first-hand the public comments made regarding the various alternatives and the need for the project. Further, in evaluating the technical studies and feedback from the development of the Draft EIS (DEIS), FHWA, on July 30, 2012, concurred with FDOT on the identification of Alternative 1C as the preferred alternative.

Since the public hearing, FDOT has consolidated public and agency comments on the DEIS and has worked with FHWA on completing the Final EIS (FEIS), which FHWA signed on November 14, 2013. Comments, such as yours, will also be part of our consideration as we develop the Record of Decision on the project, and we thank you for your input in this important decision. By copy of this email, we are providing your comments to FDOT to ensure that they are included in the administrative record.

If you have any questions on the NEPA process or the status of the EIS for the Crosstown Parkway Extension project, please let me know. You may also contact Ms. Beatriz Caicedo, the FDOT project manager, at Beatriz.Caicedo@dot.state.fl.us should you have questions about the project in general.

Cathy Kendall, AICP
Senior Environmental Specialist
FHWA - FL, PR and VI
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 553-2225
I AM OPPOSED TO THE CROSSTOWN PARKWAY BRIDGE. Ray Treacy
Thank you for your comments regarding the proposed Crosstown Parkway Extension project in Port. St. Lucie, Florida.

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Senior Environmental Specialist  
FHWA - FL, PR and VI  
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 553-2225  
cathy.kendall@dot.gov
Dear Ms. Kendall,

I am writing on behalf of common sense and reason. The proposed bridge across the St Lucie River in Port St Lucie, FL has been a bad idea since the city decided 2 decades ago to go through a State Park and Aquatic Preserve to spur growth of a downtown that doesn't exist. If a needs assessment was done today, the results would not be the same as the one done before the economic slow down in the construction of new homes in our Country and especially Florida. Port St Lucie has one of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation. 1 in 6 homes have been foreclosed on in this bedroom community. This city is not a thriving center of industry and has never had a healthy economy and the developers who were given free reign to bulldoze 600 acre sections of wild natural wetlands at a time to create this sprawling mess of 2nd homes for a retiring population.

Now the health of the rivers and the estuaries are becoming death zones and our local problems have reached into the US Congress for assistance in correcting the damage that has been done to this entire region of South Florida.

A bridge going through this State Park is more than ill advised. The proponents do not talk about the environment because they cannot defend their support for construction of this bridge at the expense of what little is left of what was. These State Park lands were sold by the very same developers who would now ask DOT to approve permitting through environmentally sensitive lands. The land was purchased by the State of Florida through a Conservation Lands Fund. Our natural areas are few in Port St Lucie. Our public lands are under attack and this bridge is nothing more than a developers dream on an old drawing board. Their plan has been a segmented project that marches toward another bridge they want to build over the Indian River Lagoon. A bridge they tried to get approved 16 years ago and failed. We do not need more bridges across these waters. Port St Lucie has 2 bridges, one on either side of this proposed bridge, not more than 2 miles North and South. Both bridges are in need of work. The Prima Vista Bridge North of the Halpatiokee Trail is sinking into the wetland that was once a swamp marsh. This bridge needs funds to keep it safe. It is unthinkable to allow this city to build another bridge across these threatened areas when they are not even taking care of the bridges and roadways they have.

Stop this insanity. I support the environmental groups that stand against another mistake disguised as progress. Our children will thank you for saving our wildlife.

Dyana Boyd Voss
St Lucie County, Florida