



# SUMMARY

## Bridge Aesthetics Committee Meeting on January 6, 2021

Cortez Road (SR 684) from SR 789 (Gulf Drive) to 123<sup>rd</sup> Street West  
Bridge Replacement Design (Manatee County)  
FPID Number: 430204-2-52-01

**LOCATION** Virtual Meeting (via GoToMeeting)

**TIME** 9:00 am – 10:15 am

**ATTENDEES** *Committee Members*  
Jeff Vey, Bridgeport Condos  
Ann Marie Nicholas, Room with a Hue

*Project Team*

Roxann Lake, Florida Department of Transportation (Project Manager)  
Alvimarie Corales, Sarasota-Manatee MPO  
Kaylene Johnson, Florida Department of Transportation  
Brian Rick, Florida Department of Transportation  
Jesten Abraham, Florida Department of Transportation  
Doug Hershey, Lochner (Consultant Project Manager)  
Adrian Moon, WSP  
Laura Turner, Laura Turner Planning Services

**Unable to Attend** *Committee Members*  
Mayor John Chappie, Bradenton Beach  
Joe Rodgers, Seafood Shack  
Karen Bell, Tide Tables  
Michael Bazzy, Bradenton Beach Marina  
Connie Morrow, Cortez resident and Bradenton Beach property owner  
Joe Adoma, Cortez Park

**PREPARED BY:** Laura Turner

**Date:** January 8, 2021

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has begun design plans for the Cortez Road bridge replacement from SR 684 (Gulf Drive) in Bradenton Beach to 123<sup>rd</sup> Street West in Bradenton. A preliminary meeting of the Bridge Aesthetics Committee was held on August 12, 2020. This summary provides the highlights of the January 6, 2021 meeting discussion, which followed a PowerPoint presentation (slides attached for reference). In addition, this meeting was recorded and the video may be viewed by using this link:  
<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/dcd43d44e1dbb337841a27d4bac572e0ff0c429b64128a38d99bc579f657c161>

Roxann Lake, FDOT Project Manager, welcomed the group and noted that she is available for one-on-one conversations at any time. She also noted that the Bridge Advisory Committee (BAC) membership has expanded to include a wider range of community interests.

## **Agenda**

Following introductions, Adrian Moon reviewed the meeting agenda:

- Summary of the last BAC meeting;
- What the project team heard from the BAC;
- New feedback from the community; and
- Introduction to pier options.

## **What the Project Team Heard from the BAC**

After reviewing the BAC purpose and goals, design terminology, and project history, Mr. Moon summarized the input we have received so far regarding bridge aesthetics.

- Past input indicated that a “mega bridge” is not wanted; should not dominate.
- The bridge needs to be functional (move traffic and boats).
- Be aware of project costs.

## **BAC - Additional General Design Considerations**

- For the piers/columns, have clean lines, creating an elegance, not a “mega” structure.
- Have the bridge reflect the existing bridge but just taller.
- The bridge needs to create a sense of place; know you are in the special communities of Cortez and Bradenton Beach.
- The bridge needs to be subtle rather than “eye grabbing”.
- Aesthetic considerations:
  - Include aesthetic elements without driving up the project costs;
  - Bridge reflects a sense of place for both Bradenton Beach (west end) and Cortez (east end);
  - Visualizations are important tools; and
  - Consider vegetation.
- Bridge lighting at night (in addition to the roadway) should be more subtle, more vintage
- Use stone face for the bridge, if possible. [Materials can be used, like coquina, for a more historic look; need to look at what will be cost effective and durable.]
- The more historic the bridge can look, the better.

## **BAC - Fishing Pier Input**

- Today, there are fishing opportunities at the east end of the bridge. At the last BAC meeting, members indicated in interest in maintaining that opportunity.
- Mr. Moon noted that there may be a need to have trade-offs between bridge aesthetics and the fishing pier due to budget constraints.
- When keeping a fishing pier at the east end, be sure it is subtle and not an attraction; want it there for use but if it becomes an attraction/destination it will add to traffic and parking issues.
- A fishing pier at the east end is a good idea.
- Before the next BAC meeting, members need to check with the community about fishing pier ideas and be ready to report at the next BAC meeting.

## Future Input Needed

- **Pier Options**
  - Noted that the thicker the piers, the lower the bridge appears and likewise, the thinner the piers, the taller it appears.
  - Pier options will be shared with the group for review, which will be discussed at the next BAC meeting.
  
- **Pier Overlooks**
  - To have or not to have
  - If included, should there be historic or educational plaques; local community art?
  - It was noted that overlooks would need to be located where the bridge is fairly flat; don't want to encourage fishing from the overlooks. The best spots would be at the piers on both sides of the main channel. This would provide a total of four overlooks on the bridge.

## Project Team Clarifications

- The multi-columns will help with construction phasing.
- The main objective is to have the bridge as low as possible while working with the constraints – tying to the existing roadway at each end of the bridge and vertical clearance.
- Sidewalks will remain under the bridge.

## General Discussion

- Clarified BAC goals at this point
  - BAC members to provide feedback to the design team.
  - BAC members to share information with the community, and in turn, report on that input to the project team.
  - To have an open dialogue about the aesthetics of the bridge, wanting to come up with a design that is in keeping with the community.
  - BAC members concurred with these goals.
- Look at viewpoints – don't want views (like sunrise or sunset) impaired or blocked; also look at the bridge from a distance as well as the driver's experience as they go over the bridge.
- The Bridgeport Condos community needs more information about the design project; lots of misinformation circulating; don't ignore this community in the design process
- Consider a viewpoint from the bike path that goes under the bridge (Bradenton Beach side).
- Consider a kayak launch area at the west end, perhaps near the marina.  
[Constructing a boat launch is outside the scope of this project.]
- Having a water taxi would be ideal.  
[This suggestion will be passed along to the MPO and another group within FDOT]

## General Questions

- What will the actual roadway look like?  
[There will be two 12-foot travel lanes, two 10-foot shoulders, two 10-foot sidewalks. In addition, there will be two 6-foot wide bicycle lanes at each bridge approach. Bicyclists will have two options to travel on the bridge: ride in the 10-foot shoulder or in the 10-foot sidewalk.]
- Does the bridge go over businesses at either approach?  
[At the west end, the bridge lines up with the existing bridge. At the east end, the bridge will be longer than the existing one, given that the bridge will be higher and will need more horizontal distance to tie back to the existing roadway. Tide Tables (on the south side of the bridge/Cortez Road) will not have direct access to get on the bridge. One will need to go under the bridge to the new “jug handle” road that will intersect with Cortez Road. On the plans, the light color is the bridge and the darker color is the roadway.]

## Project Contact

All questions and comments about this project should be directed to Roxann Lake (FDOT Project Manager).

FDOT – District One Project Manager  
Roxann Lake, CPM  
Phone: 863-519-2990  
Email: [Roxann.Lake@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Roxann.Lake@dot.state.fl.us)

## Action Items

- Before the next BAC meeting, members need to check with the community about fishing pier ideas and be ready to report at the next BAC meeting.
- Next meeting will be from 10 am to noon on January 20, 2021 (virtually)