



# SUMMARY

## Bridge Aesthetics Committee Meeting on April 22, 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** 10:00 am – 11:30 am

**ATTENDEES** *Committee Members*

Jeff Vey, Bridgeport Condos (Bradenton Beach)  
Ann Marie Nicholas, Room with a Hue (Bradenton Beach)  
Bobby Woodson, Tide Tables Restaurant (Cortez)

*Others in Attendance*

Gwen Woodson, Tide Tables Restaurant (Cortez)  
Terry Dieterle, potential future Hunters Point property owner  
Kane Kaiman, *The Islander*

*Project Team*

Roxann Lake, Florida Department of Transportation (Project Manager)  
Doug Hershey, Lochner (Consultant Project Manager)  
Adrian Moon, WSP  
Rachel Rodgers, LA Design  
Laura Turner, Laura Turner Planning Services

**Unable to Attend** *Committee Members*

Joe Adorna, Cortez Park (Cortez Park) – provided input via email  
Connie Morrow, Cortez resident and Bradenton Beach property owner  
Mayor John Chappie, Bradenton Beach  
Joe Rodgers, Seafood Shack (Cortez)  
Karen Bell, Tide Tables (Cortez)  
Michael Bazzy, Bradenton Beach Marina  
Gloria Weir, Cortez Park (Cortez)  
David Galuszka

**PREPARED BY:** Laura Turner

**Date:** April 27, 2021

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is preparing design plans for the Cortez Road bridge replacement from SR 789 (Gulf Drive) in Bradenton Beach to 123<sup>rd</sup> Street West in Bradenton. The Bridge Aesthetics Committee (BAC) consists of community representatives from Cortez and Bradenton Beach, providing input on the bridge aesthetics. The group's seventh meeting was held on April 22, 2021. This summary provides the highlights of that 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/b81dda9ba24df214189260a1ae3b02688379e742f7bf8af82d4199d052cc8875>.

Roxann Lake, FDOT Project Manager, welcomed the group and introduced the project team and the BAC members in attendance. She also noted that she is available for one-on-one conversations at any time.

## **Agenda**

Following introductions, Adrian Moon reviewed the meeting agenda:

- Team and committee introductions;
- Roadway and pedestrian lighting options;
- Landscaping treatment options;
- Overlook options;
- Additional feedback from the community; and
- Next steps.

It was noted the BAC focuses only on the bridge aesthetics; input not related to aesthetics could be shared at the end of the meeting as time allowed. Likewise, non-BAC members had the opportunity to share comments at the end of the meeting.

## **Roadway and Pedestrian Lighting Options** (slides 4 through 15)

Concepts were shown for two options: (1) lower light poles (more decorative and need more of them) and (2) higher light poles (standard look and need less of them) as well as from different viewpoints. The BAC consensus was for the lower level lighting.

### ***BAC Input***

- Bobby Woodson: likes the lower light profile
- Joe Adorna: prefers the lower level lighting
- Ann Marie Nicholas: prefers the lower level lighting
- Jeff Vey: personally either is fine; Bridgeport input preferred the higher level lighting (seems to disappear more than the lower level lighting) [noted that light pole color options will be explored at the next BAC meeting]

## **Landscaping Treatment Options** (slides 16 through 19)

Some initial concepts were shown in order to get BAC feedback and guidance on the landscaping look and preferences. More detailed concepts will be prepared later in the design process. The treatment can be either more decorative (evenly spaced, more structured in look) or more natural looking varying heights and groups). Materials will be in keeping with the coastal location and will have minimal maintenance. Rachel Rodgers noted that she would be working closely with the DOT landscape architect and local agencies to address maintenance issues. BAC consensus is to: use native plant materials, use groupings to add interest, and make gateway statements (with tall trees) at each end of the bridge.

### ***BAC Input***

- Jeff Vey: go with the native materials and focus on low maintenance; should be attractive; each end of the bridge should be making a gateway statement
- Ann Marie Nicholas: likes the gateway concept with the taller trees/plants grouped there; also likes the variety; more is more; likes the tall palms against the wall; also likes the groupings to create a gateway
- Bobby Woodson
  - Clarify where the landscaping would be located in the vicinity of the Tide Tables parking lot; noted that some of the parking lot is leased from FDOT and wanted to know if the leased area will be converted to landscaping which would result in a loss of parking spaces. [That lease will continue to be in place; landscaping in that area would be in the northwest corner of the parking lot (where there are no spaces) as well as between the MSE wall and sidewalk; there will be additional future coordination with the project team to address this area]
  - Would like to see landscaping under the bridge; supports making the area look better
  - Needs to see concepts of how the Tide Tables area will look before providing comments [more details to be provided by Adrian at the next meeting]
- Joe Adorna: prefers the low level, native landscaping to hide the wall

### **Pedestrian Overlook Options (slides 20 through 24))**

The pedestrian overlooks will be located on either side of the channel span, two on each side. Two options were reviewed: Option A – rectangular shape with curved edges and Option B - curved/arch shape. The BAC also discussed whether or not to include benches. Both options have about the same area and can accommodate benches. A clearance of 32 inches is needed to be ADA- compliant. It was also noted that the railing is a bit higher since this is a pedestrian/bicycle facility and if sitting on a bench the individual would be looking at the railing rather than the view. BAC consensus is to go with the simple curve option without benches.

### ***BAC Input***

- Jeff Vey: Consider interpretative signs to describe the sense of place; doesn't need to be decided today [noted that space can be provided for these types of signs in the future when the local communities can generate them]; don't include benches; take up too much space
- Ann Marie Nicholas: likes the simple curve option; yes to the bench
- Bobby Woodson: prefers the simple curve option; no to the bench (encourages people to gather rather than move along the bridge)
- Joe Adorna: prefers the rectangular option with the curved edges; provides more room for standing and for bicycles

### **Questions**

- Today there is a drainage ditch on the south side of the Cortez Road and the Tide Table parking lot. How will the bridge drainage be handled? [There will be drainage inlets on the bridge, which will carry the runoff to 125<sup>th</sup> Street W and will be piped to the retention pond within the jug handle. No water from the bridge will run-off onto the existing Tide Tables parking lot.]
- Will there be stairs from the bridge down to Tide Tables/Cortez? [No; not enough space to accommodate stairs and/or ramp for ADA compliance; pedestrians will need to come down to ground level and then go back to Tide Tables]

- Is the railing color in the overlook options what will be used? [this was an example; color chips will be sent to the group before next meeting; colors look different on each computer screen; this will give a better idea of the actual color palette]
- Will people be able to fish from the overlooks? [no; too high in the air; did consider a fishing pier under the bridge on the east end; additional input from community led to a “no go” decision – no place for additional parking if becomes a destination, would encourage loitering/sleeping overnight, etc.]
- Can part of the existing bridge remain and be used as a fishing pier on the east side? [no; not enough space; also creates more massing which is counter to the BAC and community input about less intrusive look]
- Where does the bridge begin/end? Where is the 65-foot height of the bridge? Is it near Hunters Point? [The maximum grade for reaching the bridge’s highest point, 65 feet, is 5%. On the east side of the bridge, the MSE wall is 19.5 feet high where the bridge ends and the roadway begins. The MSE wall height gradually drops to 7.5 feet, next to the pond (within the jug handle). The MSE wall is 250 feet long along the northside of the roadway and 360 feet long along the southside of the roadway. A concept was shared with the group that illustrates the MSE wall location and heights, which is attached for reference. The project team has requested from the Hunters Point developer the most current site plan and has received no response so the project team does not have the information to the Hunters Point part of the question.]
- How will traffic be redirected at Hunters Point? [The project team does not have that information. However, for any access points to public roads, the developer will need to obtain approval from Manatee County (site plan and access to county roads) and FDOT (access to any state roads, like Cortez Road).
- Will there be sound barriers as a part of this project? Bridgeport has concerns about noise impacts. [A noise analysis study was completed during the Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) for this project. Once the Phase II, or 60%, plans are submitted (and all comments addressed), the PD&E study noise study will be updated using the design details.]
- Will there be a sea wall at Bridgeport? [Yes, it will parallel the water line and then make a 45 degree turn and go about 5 feet to tie into the existing ground]

### **General Discussion**

- Bobby Woodson: concerned about access to Tide Tables Restaurant [project team is available to meet when further along with the project design]

### **Questions from Kane Kaiman (*The Islander*)**

The following questions were asked and answered at the meeting.

- Requested the phone number for Terry Dieterle (which he provided)
- Will a second noise study be done? [After 60% plans are submitted (and review comments are addressed), the noise analysis will be completed, which will update the PD&E study noise analysis by using the design details]
- Will the interpretative message plaque be similar to the panorama signs provided at national parks? [yes]

**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**

- Project team will send out color chips before the next meeting, which will focus on color palette and textures
- The date and time for the next BAC meeting will be determined and will be held virtually. An information packet will be sent in advance of the meeting so the BAC members can review and share with their communities beforehand

Attachment: Meeting #7 presentation slides and MSE wall concept in Cortez