

## ATTACHMENT 3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

### 3A SOCIAL & ECONOMIC

Field reviews of the corridor and existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases from St. Lucie County were used to assess the socio-economic characteristics and impacts associated with the proposed bridge construction.

The project will not result in significant impacts to community facilities. This is described further in each of the following sections for each of the social resources (3A-1 to 3A-7).

#### 3A-1 Social

##### *Community Facilities*

Community facilities are shown on the Community Facilities Figure. There are two community facilities within the study area: North Causeway Island Park and Water's Edge Recovery Center. There are no direct impacts to Water's Edge Recovery Center. The Recommended Alternative does not directly impact the North Causeway Island Park (see Attachment 4 – Cultural, Section 3B-1 and 3B-4). More detail regarding the North Causeway Island Park can be found in the *Section 4(f) Determination of Applicability* report dated September 2016.

Temporary access and noise impacts could occur during construction, but are expected to be short-term. The study corridor is situated in a medium densely populated area, with most of the noise sensitive locations consisting of live-aboard marinas adjacent to the bridge. Noise control measures will include those contained in FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. Special consideration may be required to minimize noise and vibration impacts resulting from the expected bridge construction process. These considerations could include any of the following: limitations on the construction activities including pile driving operations, temporary noise abatement structures around noisy equipment, and methods to measure and reduce ground borne vibration impacts.

##### *Community Cohesion*

The project consists of replacement of the existing bridge connecting the mainland with the barrier island. The project would not divide neighborhoods or increase social isolation. The project is expected to enhance community cohesion, because the project includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities that complete this segment of the ECG. Further, the project includes a fixed bridge that eliminates the automobile traffic from having to stop for boat traffic passing under the bridge. The bridge will be extended over Old Dixie Highway and the FEC Railroad further enhancing the connectivity between the barrier island and mainland.



Community Facilities Figure

### *Non-discrimination considerations*

*Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations*, signed by the President on February 11, 1994, directs federal agencies to take appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The project was developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, along with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice or EJ), which ensures that minority and/or low-income households are neither disproportionately adversely impacted by major transportation projects, nor denied reasonable access to them by excessive costs or physical barriers (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 1994). This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

Based on 2014 United States Census Bureau data, approximately 51.3% of the populations found within block groups located within the vicinity of project corridor are White, 10.0% are Hispanic, 38.3% are black. Approximately 12.9% of the households had incomes below the poverty level.

There are no minority and low-income populations (EJ populations) within the census block groups, in the study area or in the immediate vicinity; thus, there would be no adverse impact from right-of-way (R/W) acquisition or relocations of EJ populations. Because this is a bridge replacement project, there will be temporary construction impacts from noise, access, and travel along the road, but the impacts would be the same for all persons that use the roadway and thus not disproportionately adverse. The project is expected to enhance access for all users because there will be sidewalks and bicycle facilities constructed that will connect the mainland with the barrier island.

Based on these factors, the proposed improvements would not result in adverse impacts to minority or low-income households, elderly, or handicapped persons, and would not deny reasonable access to them from excessive cost or physical barrier. Instead the project is expected to enhance the movement of goods and people throughout the corridor. In accordance with the provisions of *Executive Order 12898* and *FHWA Order 6640.23a*, no further EJ analysis is required.

### *Scenic Highway*

The SR A1A North Bridge project area lies within the limits of the Treasure Coast Scenic Highway (TCSH). This TCSH designation extends along SR A1A from the Indian River/St. Lucie County line across the Indian River Lagoon to US Highway 1; south on US 1 to Seaway Drive (SR A1A south); across the lagoon along SR A1A to the St. Lucie/ Martin County line. The Scenic Highway also includes North Indian River Drive from the Martin County line north to Seaway Drive in Historic Downtown Ft. Pierce.

Coordination occurred with Mr. Ed Defini, St. Lucie TPO and FDOT Scenic Highway Coordinator, Lauren Rand on January 13, 2016. The meeting minutes are in the project file. Based on the coordination, FDOT commits to replace all Scenic Highway Signs and ECG signs impacted during construction. Based on the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the commitment to replace scenic highway and the ECG signs if impacted during construction, the project is not expected to have an adverse effect on the TCSH. To the contrary, the project will enhance the TCSH.

The proposed improvements will have short term impacts to the community facilities and temporary disruptions to traffic patterns. But these impacts are not significant. The proposed improvements will enhance the TCSH by completing the gap in the ECG over the bridge. The project also enhances community cohesion.

### **3A-2 Economic**

The replacement of the bascule bridge with a fixed bridge will enhance movement of goods and services. With the extension of the bridge over the FEC railroad and Old Dixie Highway, the direct connection to properties along SR A1A between the Indian River Lagoon and Old Dixie Highway will no longer be available. However, Juanita Avenue will be extended between Old Dixie Highway and US Highway 1 to the north. These connections will provide reasonable access to the businesses along SR A1A and Old Dixie Highway. Access to these businesses will be maintained throughout construction. Some current “pass by” traffic that stops at the businesses along SR A1A may be affected, but with proper signage and the connector roads north and south of the bridge access is not restricted and is not substantially affected. The project is not expected to have a significant effect.

### **3A-3 Land Use Changes**

The ETAT review indicated that the proposed project is compatible with the St. Lucie County Comprehensive Plan and the City of Fort Pierce Comprehensive Plan. St. Lucie TPO commented that local businesses may be temporarily impacted during construction but the effects would be minimal. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity noted that the proposed bridge replacement to a high-level fixed bridge would enhance the area by providing reduced traffic congestion and may provide increased safety in the area.

City of Ft. Pierce and St. Lucie County Future Land Use (FLU) is consistent with the existing land use patterns. It is anticipated that FLU would remain unchanged after the replacement of the bridge. Within the Transportation Element of the St. Lucie County Comprehensive Plan, the SR A1A North Bridge is identified for future reconstruction. The surrounding land use in the study area is essentially built out or open water/parks/conservation lands. The replacement of the existing bridge is not expected to affect land use changes in the area.

### **3A-4 Mobility**

The proposed project is expected to enhance mobility of both the roadway traffic and the marine traffic with the removal of the bascule bridge. With the addition of a shared-use path, a sidewalk and bike lanes, mobility for multiple users will be enhanced.

### 3A-5 Aesthetic Effects

A viewshed analysis was conducted for the project. The project will result in a substantially higher bridge footprint than the existing bridge. But the bridge will also be constructed with fewer piles; thus, reducing the “cluttered” appearance under the bridge. Though this bridge will be higher, much of residents’ views of the bridge will not substantially change as their homes are either set back from the Indian River Lagoon or face an east/west direction which is the same direction as the bridge. Additionally, in some cases especially northeast of the bridge, there are mangrove islands within the viewshed that provide some visual screening and these mangrove islands will not be removed. Thus, significant impacts on the viewshed are not anticipated.

### 3A-6 Relocation Potential

FDOT prepared a *Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)* for the Recommended Alternative. Residential relocations will not be required. Based on the CSRP, the following potential business, personal property or sign relocations could occur:

Day Boat Seafood, LLC (office) – potential relocation. The proposed improvements do not directly impact the facility, but the new R/W line will be approximately 2.6 feet from the structure. Acquisition of a portion of the property may warrant relocation of the business from its current site. A review of potential business sites was conducted and it appears that there are many available properties for sale and rent and it is anticipated that there will be available properties during the acquisition and relocation phases of the project.

Sign relocations will be required for Dunkin Donuts, Bernard Eagan and Company, North Causeway Island Park and Offshore Performance Marina. These signs will be relocated with exposure similar to the existing exposure.

Offshore Performance Marina – Personal property relocation; boat storage. The boats can be stored at other locations on the property.

In addition to the potential relocation impacts, R/W is required from nine other businesses and six vacant parcels for the Recommended Alternative. Approximately 3.50 acres of R/W will be required for the roadway/bridge construction and approximately 2.26 acres of R/W will be required for the stormwater management facilities. Details regarding the effects of R/W impacts is included in the CSRP.

#### *Minimization and Mitigation*

In order to minimize the unavoidable effects of R/W acquisition and displacement of people, FDOT will carry out a R/W and relocation program in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17). Groups of people protected by non-discrimination laws will not be impacted by the proposed project.

FDOT provides advance notification of impending R/W acquisition. Before acquiring R/W, all properties will be appraised based on comparable sales and land use values in the area. Owners of property to be acquired will be offered and paid fair market value for their property rights.

No person lawfully occupying real property will be required to move without at least 90 days written notice of the intended vacation date, and no occupant of a residential property will be required to move until decent, safe and sanitary replacement housing is made available. "Made available means that the affected person has either by himself obtained and has the right of possession of replacement housing, or that the FDOT offered the relocatee decent, safe and sanitary housing which is within his financial means and available for immediate occupancy.

At least one relocation specialist is assigned to each highway project to carry out the Relocation Assistance and Payments program. A relocation specialist will contact each person to be relocated to determine individual needs and desires, and to provide information, answer questions, and give help in finding replacement property. Relocation services and payments are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

All tenants and owner-occupant relocatees will receive an explanation regarding all options available to them, such as (1) varying methods of claiming reimbursement for moving expenses; (2) rental replacement housing, either private or publicly subsidized; (3) purchase of replacement housing; and (4) moving owner-occupied housing to another location.

Financial assistance is available to the eligible relocatee to:

- Reimburse the relocatee for the actual reasonable costs of moving from homes, businesses, and farm operations acquired for a highway project.
- Make up the difference, if any, between the amount paid for the acquired dwelling and the cost of a comparable decent, safe and sanitary dwelling available on the private market, as determined by the department.
- Provide reimbursement of expenses, incidental to the purchase of a replacement dwelling.
- Make payment for eligible increased interest cost resulting from having to get another mortgage at a higher interest rate. Replacement housing payments, increased interest payments, and closing costs are limited to \$31,000 combined total.

A displaced tenant may be eligible to receive a payment, not to exceed \$7,200, to rent a replacement dwelling or room, or to use as down payment, including closing costs, on the purchase of a replacement dwelling.

The brochures that describe in detail the Florida Department of Transportation's Relocation Assistance Program and Right of Way acquisition program are "Residential Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program", "Relocation Assistance Business, Farms and Non-profit Organizations", "Sign Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program", "Mobile Home Relocation Assistance", and "Relocation Assistance Program Personal Property Moves". All of these brochures are distributed at all public hearings and made available upon request to any interested persons.

Though there is R/W acquisition and business impacts, these impacts are minor and not considered significant.