

1. Discussion Objective:

Work Session Date: Mar 18, 2013

To examine the possible need for an additional bridge to serve the island and determine if Council wishes to support an effort to acquire such a bridge.

2. Submitter of Information:

- Council
- Town Staff
- Town Attorney

3. Estimated Time for this item:

30 minutes

5. Background:

Town Manager	Town Attorney	Finance Director	Public Works Director	Community Development Director	Parks & Recreation Director	Town Clerk
						

Additional Bridge, Fort Myers Beach

The idea of adding another bridge has been around for a long time. Numerous options have been discussed but economic, environmental, and other issues have always nixed the idea while it was still in the discussion stage.

The traffic here on the island, four months out of the year, is horrendous. Imagine the environmental impact of having bumper to bumper cars, a solid four hours every day, lined up inching their way both on and off the beach. The two lane, San Carlos Blvd, line in the afternoon stretches for miles, to Kelly Rd and beyond coming on in the early afternoon. During the late afternoon, it goes four to five miles down the island six mile's, from the bridge south. This becomes so unbearable for some that when they reach the library they shoot up the center lane, mostly at a high speed, causing a hazard to themselves, pedestrians, bicyclists and people exiting the side street.

One key event makes this concept worthy of another discussion. About a year or two ago, a barge hit the Matanzas Pass Bridge, knocking off a large piece of concrete from a main support girder. The bridge was closed for a few hours for safety concerns. The girder did not sustain a significant amount of damage and it was repairable. If the barge had hit harder, however, serious damage would have resulted in closing the bridge for an extended period of time.

We live and work on a barrier island that is also a wonderful tourist destination. To a great extent, our "way of life" is dependent upon the singular Matanzas Pass Bridge. The economy of the north end of Estero Island is definitely dependent upon it. We are very vulnerable to massive hurricanes, such as Charley in 2004. If, for any reason, the Matanzas Pass Bridge is out of commission for an extended period, the north end businesses will die a slow death.

Additionally, the bridge is about 32 years old at its mid- to late-life expectancy. How much longer can it be maintained without extensive repairs and/or replacement? It is located front stage to a heavy saltwater environment. The condition of the support pilings needs to be checked. Sanibel's bridge had to be replaced for that reason. With a mid-island bridge in place, the northern Matanzas Bridge could be closed for repair/replacement with a lesser impact on the island.

Numerous locations have been suggested in the past:

1. Coconut to Lovers key
2. Bowditch Point to Summerlin
3. Main Street to Topps area
4. Winkler to Publix area

Each had its advantages and disadvantages.

Coconut to Lovers Key

A bridge at this location would be the longest bridge of all, extending through the heart of the Back Bay. Primarily, Lovers Key is a pristine environment and a bridge at this location would be devastating. Additionally, the commute from the north end down to Lovers Key, over the bridge to 41, around to San Carlos would be too lengthy.

Bowditch Point to Summerlin

This would be the least used and least favorable location. A bridge at this location would not relieve traffic congestion in the Times Square area; it would only add to it.

Main Street to Topps Area

This location would dump cars out on the other side of the bridge at the base or the light by the Nauti Turtle. Additionally, cars making a left coming to the island to use the bridge would cause even more congestion. Main Street would be a new nightmare. Port Carlos Cove, at the end of Main Street, would be destroyed. The Cove right now is a nice, sleepy community with very little traffic.

Winkler to Publix Area

This appears to be the most promising of the routes. A 100-foot wide right-of-way existed back in the 1990's. This right-of-way was given back to the state by Lee County in 1998 (see attached Title Transfer). Initially, environmental issues resulted in the loss of this route. The resulting destruction of the mangroves under the previous route design would have been great.

This route is feasible, however, if the route is redesigned instead of going straight into the island at the Publix location. At the end of Winkler, if the route were diverted and turned to proceed through the mangrove area at its least destructive point, it would be feasible. This route would not enter the island at Publix; a more favorable entry area can be found.

The Winkler to Mid-Island Bridge

If Matanzas Pass Bridge were out of commission for an extended period of time, the north end would die. The commute from San Carlos Island to Estero Island would go through Bonita Springs, a hefty 35-mile distance and over an hour in time. Bonita Beach Rd. and Hickory Blvd. would be over loaded and jammed.

At the present time, the economic environment is ideal for a new bridge project. This is exactly the type of project the Jobs Program is about—building bridges, roads and infrastructure. Winkler Road would immediately extend to four lanes, as was originally intended. There would be a fly-over from south bound Summerlin to west bound Winkler, similar to the fly-over Gladiolus to Summerlin. The exit lane of this Winkler-Gladiolus fly-over would be extended to connect into the new fly-over lane. That lane is already halfway there. A continuous right turn lane would be required from Winkler to north bound Summerlin. This would connect onto the lane from Summerlin to Gladiolus. The new four-lane Winkler should be lined with Palm trees as a way to welcome visitors to the Beaches of Fort Myers. This concept would fit in with the redesign of Estero Blvd., as already set in Lee County's plan.

A trolley lane on San Carlos and widening of Matanzas Bridge would no longer be required. Once the new bridge is open, it will see more use than the one at the north end. A flashing light would be required at the island base of the bridge eight months of the year; during season, a stoplight or traffic volunteer would be required.

The commute from mid-island to Matanzas Bridge to Winkler is 10 miles and about 20 minutes during off season. During season, this commute extends to an hour and a half, minimum, for the same distance. With the new bridge, a direct route would connect the island to the Winkler-Summerlin intersection and the environmental savings would be great.

Every other base pilaster of the mid-island bridge would be built with a retention tank to catch rainwater run-off. These tanks would be a sediment/oil/grease separator, treating the water before it discharges into the Back Bay. This would further reduce the environmental impact the bridge would have on the estuaries.

Each base pilaster would be designed to have a fish habitat built below it. Each habitat would be different, attracting different species of fish. What better habitat for young fish than a bridge? Enlist Florida Gulf Coast University to assist in this design.

The bridge would be 80-feet wide, four lanes, similar to the new Summerlin-College fly-over. The addition of a 6- to 8-foot wide jogging/bike path the entire length would enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Barriers would be at each side and down the middle of the road. The wall lights would be utilized the whole length with the lights changing to yellow at the top to the island, for turtles.

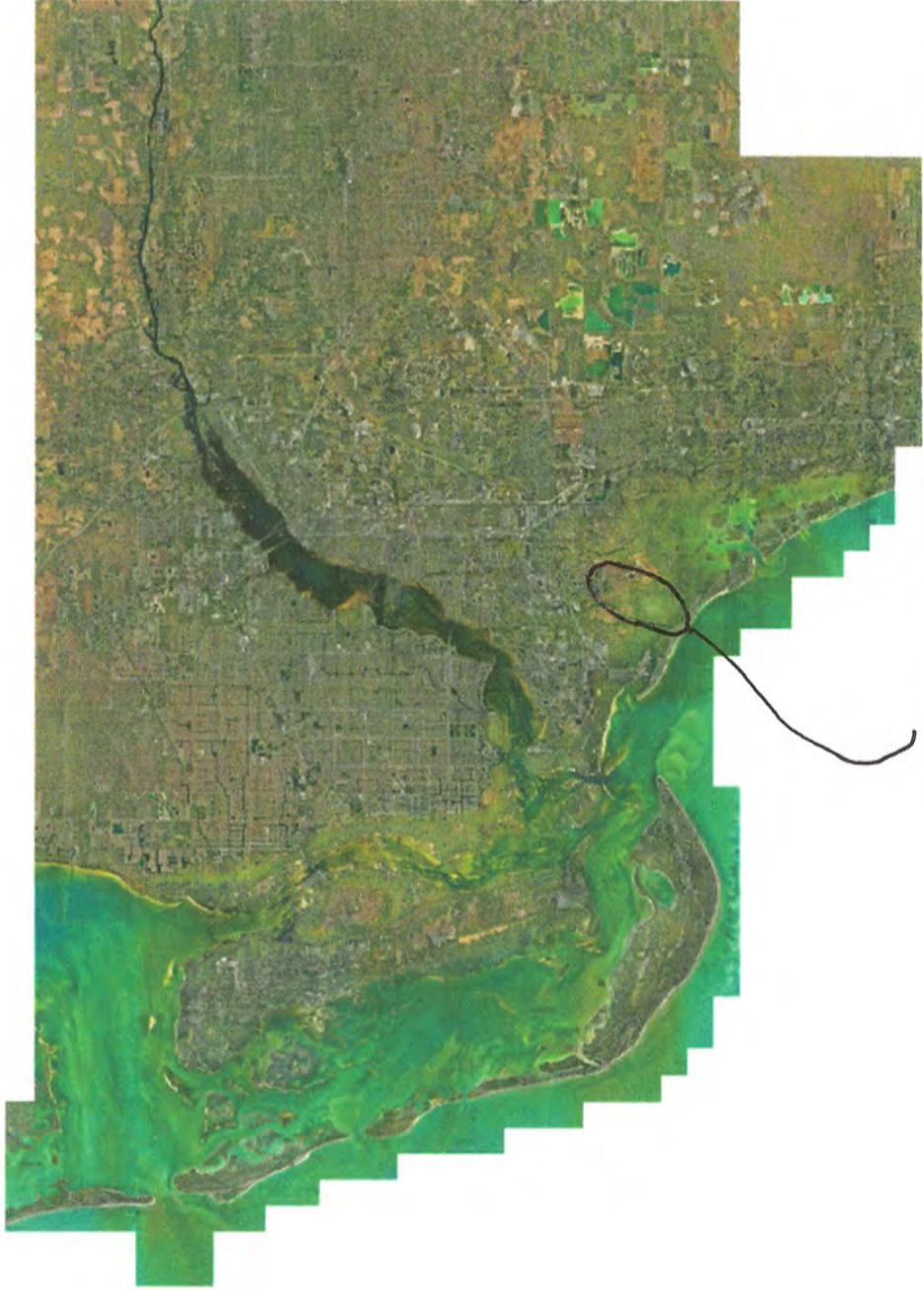
This route would be the most beautiful and scenic route. People could see the mangroves and estuary we enjoy in the Back Bay up close.

Emergency Response

The commute time of EMS to Health Park would be cut by over 10 minutes from the south/mid-island with this more direct route. If needed, the Summerlin-Winkler Fire Rescue station would have direct access to assist in Island emergencies. The new bridge would also provide an additional evacuation route.

Survey

If the council deems it appropriate, we can provide a mailer or on-line survey for the beach residents. Attached is a rough draft sample survey to get feed back from the island residents.



AREA W/IN L&E COUNTY

ELEVATED BRIDGE
OPEN UNDER

END OF WINKLER
RAMP UP

APPROXIMATE
SHORE LINE



LOSS OF MANGROVES - POSSIBLE TRANSPLANT
CUT IN TO LAST ABUTMENT BEFORE SHORE

CLEAR INTO BACK BAY



TURN INTO ISLAND ANYWHERE

DEED DONATING ORIGINAL BRIDGE RIGHT-OF-WAY
BACK TO STATE

This Instrument Prepared By and

Please Return To:
Adrienne Bellflower
Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

4496217

COUNTY DEED

(STATUTORY FORM - SECTION 125.411, F.S.)

1500/R

DR3028 P62181

THIS DEED, made this 16 day of October

A.D. 1998, between LEE COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, whose address is Post Office Box 398 Fort Myers 33902-0398, of the County of Lee in the State of Florida, party of the first part, and the BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, whose post office address is c/o Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station 115, Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000, party of the second part,

WITNESSETH: That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars, to it in hand paid by the party of the second part, receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained and sold to the said party of the second part, its successors and assigns forever, the following described land situate, lying and being in Lee, County, Florida, to-wit:

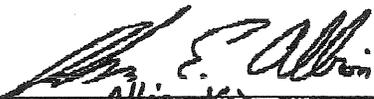
See Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, together with all riparian and littoral rights appertaining thereto.

Acceptance of Transfer of Title to Donated Lands is attached hereto as Exhibit "B" and by reference made a part hereof.

Property Appraiser's Parcel Identification Number: A portion of Strap numbers: 15-46-24-00-00001.0000; 21-46-24-00-00001.0000; 22-46-24-00-00001.0000; 28-46-24-00-00019.0000 & 28-46-24-00-00019.0010

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said party of the first part has caused these presents to be executed in its name by its Board of County Commissioners acting by the chair or Vice Chair of said board, this day and year aforesaid.

LEE COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of Florida
BY: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: 
John E. Manning, Chairman
Lee County Board of County Commissioners
Post Office Box 398
Fort Myers, Florida 33902-0398

RECORDED BY
TRUDY SHERWOOD, D.C.

EXHIBIT "B"

ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER OF TITLE TO DONATED LANDS

Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida hereby accepts this conveyance as a transfer of title of the real property as described in this Deed.

OR3028 PG2183

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Judith A. Booth
(SIGNATURE OF FIRST WITNESS)

BY: Robert J. Lovern
Robert J. Lovern

Senior Management Analyst II, DIVISION OF STATE LANDS, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, as agent for and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida

Judith A. Booth
(PRINTED, TYPED OR STAMPED NAME OF FIRST WITNESS)

Adrienne Bellflower
(SIGNATURE OF SECOND WITNESS)

Adrienne Bellflower
(PRINTED, TYPED OR STAMPED NAME OF SECOND WITNESS)

October 7, 1998
Date Signed

98 OCT 27 AM 9:04
CHARLIE GREEN, CLERK
LEE COUNTY, FL

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF LEON

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 7 day of October, 1998, by Robert J. Lovern, Senior Management Analyst II, Division of State Lands, Department of Environmental Protection, as agent for and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida. He is personally known to me.

(NOTARY PUBLIC SEAL)

Adrienne Bellflower
Notary Public

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF FLORIDA, COUNTY OF LEE

JOHN E. ALBION, VICE

Before me, a Notary Public, on this date personally appeared the undersigned ~~JOHN E. ALBION~~ **JOHN E. ALBION**, Chairman of Lee County Board of County Commissioners, Who, being sworn according to law did depose and say:

1. LEE COUNTY, a Political Subdivision of the State of Florida, is the owner of the following described property, to-wit:

"AS DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF BY REFERENCE."

2. That the above described property is free and clear of all liens, taxes, encumbrances and claims of every kind, nature and description whatsoever.

3. That within the past 90 days there have been no improvements, alterations, or repairs to the above described property for which the costs thereof remain unpaid, and that within the past 90 days there have been no claims for labor or material furnished for repairing or improving the same, which remain unpaid, except the following:

NONE

4. That there are no mechanic's, materialmen's, or laborer's liens against the above described property.

5. That this is vacant land, therefore, no personal property is being conveyed.

6. That LEE COUNTY, in the operation of said property, complied in all respects with the SALES TAX LAW of the State of Florida.

7. That affiant(s) know of no violations of Municipal Ordinances pertaining to the above described property.

8. That affiant(s) know of no Homeowners Association Fees or Condominium Association Fees that are currently due and payable.

9. That this affidavit is made for the purpose of inducing The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, of the State of Florida, to accept the donation of the said property from Lee County.

10. There are no real estate and/or personal property taxes assessed to the above described lands.

11. That no judgment or decree has been entered in any court of this state or the United States against said property which remains unsatisfied.

12. That, unless otherwise listed below, Lee County, a Political Subdivision of the State of Florida is in possession of the property.

NO ONE

13. Affiant(s) further state that they are each familiar with the nature of an oath; and with the penalties as provided by the laws of the State aforesaid for falsely swearing to statements made in an instrument of this nature. Affiant(s) further certify that they have read, or have heard read to them, the full facts of this affidavit, and understand its context.

**APPROVED
AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY**

APR 15 1000

WCK
By: William C. I.

LEE COUNTY, A POLITICAL
SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

BY *John E. Albion*
John E. Albion, Chairman of Lee
County Board of County Commissioners

Mid Island Bridge Survey

1 Your Island Status

- a Year-round resident
- b Property owner, rentals condo/house
- c Seasonal renter 4-6 month stay
- d Seasonal 2-3 month stay
- e Seasonal weekly-1 month stay

2 Where do you live/rent

- a North end, Tops to Bowdage Pt
- b Danora area
- c Public's area, mid-island
- d Beach Theater area
- e South end

3 During high tourist season, how are you affected by traffic

- a Not at all
- b Slightly inconvenienced, 10 minutes or less
- c Moderately inconvenienced, 20-30 minutes or less
- d Deeply Inconvenienced, 1 hr or less
- e A night mare, 1-2 hr to bridge

4 Your feelings on another bridge

- a Opposed to it
- b Would consider the idea, depending on location
- c I do believe it would help traffic congestion
- d Definitely in favor of it
- e Lets start tomorrow

5 **Possible locations of bridge**

- a North end, Bowdige Point to Summerlin
- b North end, Main St to Topp's area
- c Mid-Island, Winkler to Public's general area
- d Coconut to Lover's Key area
- e New located to be determined

6 **Would you sell your home if needed for the bridge**

- a Out of the question
- b I would consider it if the price was right
- c I would want more discussion on the topic as a whole
- d I would be willing to negotiate
- e Yes, definitely

7 **Do you feel another bridge is necessary**

- a Not at all
- b Yes, depending upon location
- c It may help but other improvements would be required
- d I would not use it
- e A waste of money, not needed