PUBLIC HEARING

Design Change Re-Evaluation

Of the Interstate 275 Project

Development and Environment Study

DATE: September 24, 2019

TIME: 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: 1900 Gandy Boulevard

St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

Executive Reporting Service

- 1 OPENING
- 2 MR. BOGEN: If you can make your way to
- 3 the seats, those who are standing, we're about to begin
- 4 our formal portion.
- If you can please make your way to the
- 6 seats so that we may begin our formal portion.
- 7 Pardon me. Staff, if you would help me to
- 8 direct the people to the seats so that we might begin?
- 9 Good evening. My name is Kirk Bogen and I
- 10 am the Environmental Management Engineer for the
- 11 District 7 of the Florida Department of Transportation
- 12 or FDOT.
- Welcome to the Design Change Re-Evaluation
- 14 of the Project Development and Environment or PD&E
- 15 study public hearing, for Interstate 275, or I-275,
- 16 State Road 93 from south of 54th Avenue South to north
- 17 of 4th Street North, approximately 16.3 miles in
- 18 Pinellas County, Florida.
- 19 The Work Program Item, or WPI, Segment
- 20 number is 424501-1. This environmental study has been
- 21 conducted by FDOT District 7 in compliance with all
- 22 applicable federal environmental laws pursuant to 23
- 23 United States Code Section 327 and the implementing
- 24 Memorandum of Understanding between FDOT and the
- 25 Federal Highway Administration signed on December 14th,

- 1 2016. The Florida -- the FDOT Office of Environmental
- 2 Management in Tallahassee is the approving authority.
- 3 This public hearing is being held to allow
- 4 interested persons the opportunity to provide comments
- 5 concerning the location, conceptual design and social,
- 6 economic, and environmental effects.
- 7 Today is Tuesday, September the 24th,
- 8 2019, and it's approximately 6:32. We're are assembled
- 9 at the First Baptist Church of St. Petersburg located
- 10 at 1900 Gandy Boulevard in St. Petersburg, Florida.
- 11 This public hearing is being held to give
- 12 all interested persons the opportunity to discuss the
- 13 project and to make comments on the Design Change
- 14 Re-Evaluation. Public participation at this hearing is
- 15 encouraged and solicited without regard to race, color,
- 16 creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability
- 17 or family status. This public hearing is being held
- 18 and was advertised in accordance with applicable
- 19 Federal and State laws as shown on the citation board
- 20 located next to the sign-in table. This information is
- 21 also provided in the private newsletter you received in
- 22 the mail or here tonight.
- This is your opportunity to receive
- 24 information on the project and officially comment on
- 25 the location and conceptual design for improvements to

- 1 I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th
- 2 Street North. You may also provide comments regarding
- 3 the project documents available here this evening. The
- 4 current Preferred Build Alternative for the I-275
- 5 improvements are based on environmental and engineering
- 6 analyses completed to date, as well as on public
- 7 comment that we have received.
- 8 The current Design Change Re-Evaluation is
- 9 examining the impacts of further changes to the
- 10 approved PD&E Study. Results of the cultural,
- 11 national, social, and physical and environmental
- 12 analyses are contained in the documents on display
- 13 tonight and are available on the project website.
- 14 Staff are available to answer questions regarding these
- 15 reports.
- 16 The current re-evaluation is evaluating
- 17 the addition of two express lanes on 275 from I-375 to
- 18 south of Gandy Boulevard and the addition of a second
- 19 express lane on I-275 from south of Gandy Boulevard to
- 20 north of 4th Street North. These proposed improvements
- 21 would tie in with planned improvements to the Howard
- 22 Frankland Bridge.
- The current re-evaluation also analyzes
- 24 replacing the I-275 bridges on the 4th Street North
- 25 over Big Island Gap and providing trail connections

- 1 from 4th Street North and Ulmerton Road to the Howard
- 2 Frankland Bridge. The current re-evaluation analyzes
- 3 modifications to the Gateway Expressway interchange
- 4 area to provide ramp connections in all directions to
- 5 and from the Gateway Expressway to the proposed express
- 6 lanes on I-275, as well as improvements to the
- 7 southbound I-275 ramps from Gandy Boulevard. The
- 8 current re-evaluation also examines pond site
- 9 requirements from south of 54th Avenue South to north
- 10 of 4th Street North. To meet drainage and stormwater
- 11 requirements, pond sites will be needed to accommodate
- 12 new impervious surface due to widening to accommodate
- 13 express lanes and lane continuity improvements.
- 14 Several of these new pond site locations may be outside
- 15 of the existing right-of-way.
- 16 This project is consistent with Forward
- 17 Pinellas's Long Range Transportation Plan and their
- 18 Transportation Improvement Plan. This project is also
- 19 consistent with the State Transportation Improvement
- 20 Plan and other regional plans.
- 21 Now I'm going to give you some information
- 22 about right-of-way acquisition and how you can make
- 23 comments on the project. On projects such as this, one
- of the unavoidable consequences is the necessary
- 25 acquisition of properties and the relocation of

- 1 families and businesses. For this project, we
- 2 anticipate the relocation of 16 residences and no
- 3 businesses. All right-of-way acquisition will be
- 4 conducted in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and
- 5 the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real
- 6 Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, commonly
- 7 known as the Uniform Act.
- If you are required to make any type of
- 9 move as a result of a Department of Transportation
- 10 project, you can expect be treated in a fair and
- 11 helpful manner and in compliance with the Uniform
- 12 Relocation Assistance Act. If a move is required, you
- 13 will be contacted by an appraiser who will inspect your
- 14 property. We encourage you to be present during the
- 15 inspection and provide information about the value of
- 16 your property.
- 17 You may also be eligible for relocation
- 18 advisory services and payment benefits. If you are
- 19 being moved and you are unsatisfied with the
- 20 Department's determination of your eligibility for
- 21 payment, or the amount of that payment, you may appeal
- 22 that determination. You'll be promptly furnished
- 23 necessary forms notified of the procedures to be to
- 24 followed in making that appeal.
- 25 A special word of caution: If you move

- 1 before you receive notification of the relocation
- 2 benefits that you might be entitled to, your benefits
- 3 may be jeopardized.
- 4 The relocation specialists who are
- 5 supervising the program are Joe Murphy and Susan
- 6 Cooper. They will be happy to answer your questions
- 7 and also furnish you with copies of relocation
- 8 assistance brochures.
- 9 Joe and Susan, please identify
- 10 yourselves -- they're back there in the corner -- so
- 11 that anyone who is involved in a relocation on this
- 12 project will know that they need -- know that they need
- 13 to see you regarding their property.
- When you arrived this evening, you should
- 15 have received the project newsletter containing project
- 16 information. If you were not able to sign in or did
- 17 not receive a handout, please stop by the sign-in table
- 18 before leaving this evening. If you have not already
- 19 done so, please watch the presentation that is running
- 20 continuously at the Public Hearing tonight in the
- 21 adjacent rooms. It describes the proposed I-275
- 22 improvements in greater detail.
- Before I continue, I would like to
- 24 recognize any elected officials or their
- 25 representatives who are here tonight. Please stand and

- 1 introduce yourselves for the record.
- 2 MR. JENKINS: I represent Wingate Newton,
- 3 South St. Pete, Pinellas, Hillsborough and Manatee
- 4 County.
- 5 MR. BOGEN: And your name?
- 6 MR. JENKINS: Sam Jenkins.
- 7 MR. BOGEN: Thank you.
- 8 Those who wish to provide comments during
- 9 this formal portion of the Public Hearing should
- 10 complete a speaker's card and submit it to a Department
- 11 representative. If you did not receive a speaker's
- 12 card and would like to make a public comment, please
- 13 raise your hand and an FDOT representative will be
- 14 happy to provide you with one of the comment cards.
- 15 In addition to making an oral statement
- 16 during this formal portion of the hearing, you can also
- 17 make a comment to the court reporter here tonight
- 18 after this formal portion of the Public Hearing. You
- 19 may also submit your comments to the FDOT writing.
- 20 Comments forms can be completed at a later time and
- 21 mailed to us at the preprinted address on the back of
- 22 the comment sheet. You may also email comments to us
- 23 from the project website found on the front of the
- 24 handout. Please keep in mind that comments must be
- 25 postmarked or emailed no later than Friday, October

- 1 4th, 2019, to be included in the official Public
- 2 Hearing record.
- 3 PUBLIC COMMENTS
- 4 We will now begin taking public comments. I
- 5 will call each speaker in order in which their request
- 6 was received. In an effort to accommodate all requests
- 7 to speak, we ask that each speaker keep their comments
- 8 to three minutes. Those who wish to provide additional
- 9 comments may return to the microphone following the
- 10 last speaker, or you may present your additional
- 11 comments directly to the court reporter at the end of
- 12 tonight's hearing.
- 13 As I call your name, please step to the
- 14 microphone and state your name and address before
- 15 making your comment. If you have questions, please see
- one of the FDOT representatives following this portion
- 17 of the hearing.
- 18 Our first speaker is Jonathan Gotwald.
- 19 JONATHAN GOTWALD
- MR. GOTWALD: Put me on the spot.
- 21 I'm Jonathan Gotwald. I live at 1869 76th
- 22 Place North, and I'm an owner in the Meadowlawn
- 23 Sawgrass Addition Subdivision, which could be affected
- 24 by the stormwater pond 18A. And I'd like to just --
- 25 I've submitted documents to the court reporter already,

- 1 so I'm just going to go through some of the brief
- 2 items.
- The Meadowlawn Sawgrass Addition was built in
- 4 1995 and a SWFWMD permit was issued for our stormwater
- 5 pond, which is an active and maintains stormwater pond.
- 6 During the process of the evaluations of all the
- 7 three -- of the two sites, 18A and 18B, the 18A was
- 8 selected over the 18B site, and we had some concerns
- 9 over the -- what were the reasons for that -- those
- 10 selections. And I've found that there were some things
- 11 talked about tonight about the mitigation being
- 12 saltwater-type mitigation that's not available.
- 13 So the focus that we have on it is the
- 14 utilization of the EOA No. 10 site, which is apparently
- 15 moving forward with Pinellas County and SWFWMD trying
- 16 to get the agreement put together. That site is, in
- 17 our opinion, less intrusive to the homeowners in the
- 18 adjacent areas, and we would like to see that as a
- 19 priority, you know, a first priority to utilize that
- 20 site.
- 21 In the stormwater management analysis, the
- 22 report, there was some items in there that were
- 23 identified as related to the -- our site where they
- 24 were taking four homes, our stormwater management pond,
- 25 as well as the wetland and conservation area that are

- 1 part of our subdivision. The areas that were
- 2 identified in the report noted 1.21 acres of wetlands
- 3 and surface water impact to our site. I submit that
- 4 it's closer to 3.1 acres because our stormwater pond is
- 5 a part of our surface water, as well as the
- 6 conservation area that was platted and recorded is a
- 7 part of that wetland habitat with the upland as well.
- 8 The second alternative, the 18B alternative,
- 9 we would like to have that considered heavily as a --
- 10 if the ELA 10A -- ELA No. 10 site doesn't work out with
- 11 the agreement with the county and SWFWMD, we'd like to
- 12 make sure that the School Board site is addressed
- 13 appropriately as maybe the second site because it's not
- 14 impacting homes. We understand it's impacting
- 15 recreation areas, but they also have a stormwater pond
- 16 on their site that could potentially be expanded and
- 17 modified. So there are options there that we'd like to
- 18 have considered.
- 19 Some of the design criteria that were
- 20 identified in -- am I past my three minutes?
- 21 MR. BOGEN: You are getting there, if you
- 22 could wrap up.
- 23 MR. GOTWALD: Okay. Some of the design
- 24 criteria and preliminary calculations in the drainage
- 25 report I would like to question because the design high

- 1 water that was identified -- and I understand they're
- 2 preliminary -- identified it as Elevation 8. All of
- 3 our roads in our subdivision are below Elevation 8 and
- 4 many of our lots are below that. So that functionally
- 5 wouldn't be a permitable solution. We're concerned
- 6 that if that same amount of volume is required, then
- 7 the stormwater pond may have to, you know, expand and
- 8 more homes. Am I over or --
- 9 MR. BOGEN: Yes. But if you could get with
- 10 staff afterwards and -- I know you've gotten with
- 11 staff.
- MR. GOTWALD: I mentioned my three
- 13 alternatives: Priority one is ELA, priority 2 is the
- 14 School Board site and priority 3 is our site. Thank
- 15 you.
- MR. BOGEN: Thank you.
- 17 Our next speaker is Alex Morfesis.
- 18 ALEX MORFESIS
- 19 MR. MORFESIS: Yes, sir, St. Petersburg.
- 20 First question: How does one get a PDF of the project
- 21 documents?
- MR. BOGEN: I'm not answering questions, but
- 23 the material will be on the website within the next
- 24 couple of days.
- MR. MORFESIS: All right. So in terms of

- 1 just as the gentleman described that there is plans on
- 2 sites, there is a site that may or may not be done on
- 3 the -- in the Deuce's area and that's a piece of
- 4 property that was part of a HUD-funded project. So how
- 5 is one going to deal with those issues, where the city
- 6 may or may not have to give back money?
- 7 Also, is there going to be a continuing
- 8 expansion all the way down to 54th for this express
- 9 lane eventually, or -- you know, that's the question I
- 10 have. I don't see how you just stop there and not keep
- 11 going.
- 12 Good luck. That's it.
- MR. BOGEN: All right, thank you for your
- 14 comment.
- 15 Our next speaker is John Estok.
- 16 JOHN ESTOK
- 17 MR. ESTOK: Good evening. My name is John
- 18 Estok. I live in Phillipe Parkway, in Safety Harbor,
- 19 Florida.
- I live in Safety Harbor, so I don't have
- 21 property homeowner issues, so I'm little different.
- 22 The first thing I wanted to say is we don't need these
- 23 toll lanes. The tolls are a rationing device. We do
- 24 need one additional lane south of Gandy to north of
- 25 375, but it doesn't need to be a toll lane.

- The tolls, in case you don't know, won't come
- 2 close to paying for these lanes or better transit
- 3 services that we have been told will come with them.
- 4 The biggest problem is not a lack of lanes, it's too
- 5 many interchanges in too short of an area. These kind
- of roads aren't designed to have interchanges every
- 7 mile, let alone every half a mile or less, which is
- 8 what we have in some places in Tampa and St. Pete.
- 9 The biggest problem with too many
- 10 interchanges that we do have is that they were not
- 11 designed properly in that they result in weaving -- the
- 12 weaving as cars enter from the onramp and have to weave
- around cars having to go off an offramp, and vice
- 14 versa. And this weaving that I spoke about causes the
- 15 bottleneck and congestion we all get stuck in.
- What do I think we do need to do? Well, with
- 17 275 southbound, I think we need any on/entrance ramp
- 18 from Roosevelt Boulevard, 118th Avenue and the Gateway
- 19 Express that they're working on to enter in a single
- 20 lane ramp that either enters in the left fast lane, or
- 21 at the very least is a, what's known as a basket weave
- 22 with the Gandy offbound ramp, so that would prevent
- 23 them from bottlenecking. That is, they don't weave
- 24 together. And second, that the onramp to 275 south
- 25 that comes from Gandy east and westbound enter into a

- 1 new single fourth lane. They are doing a single lane,
- 2 but it's not going to be in a fourth lane; it will have
- 3 to merge in.
- 4 275 northbound, a ramp Gandy eastbound that
- 5 enters into the left fast lane and an onramp from Gandy
- 6 westbound, that's currently not even available. It's
- 7 an incomplete interchange. That's too big of an
- 8 interchange for it to be incomplete like that.
- 9 And I'd also ask that we have a direct
- 10 flyover ramp from 275 north to 118th in the Gateway and
- 11 abolish what we have now, which is this ridiculous
- 12 270-degree angle ramp. It's almost the a circle you
- 13 have to do.
- Regarding lane continuity, this is a problem
- 15 that results from left exits. We need to abolish left
- 16 exits and particularly left exit-onlys.
- 17 And one big disappointment I have is that
- 18 nothing's done with the first lane continuity issue,
- 19 that is 275 north, the exit on lane to lane change at
- 20 54th Avenue South. Thank you.
- 21 MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- Our next speaker is Toby Vongkoht.
- 23 Did I get it right?
- MR. VONGKOHT: Yes, that fine.
- 25 My name is Toby Vongkoht. I live at 8164

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- 1 Martin Lane in Seminole. I just heard about this a
- 2 couple hours ago on Facebook, so I decided to skip work
- 3 and come here instead. And what concerned me the most
- 4 about this project as a far as Segment B and C goes is
- 5 that express lanes, also called Lexus lanes, are going
- 6 to be added to the major corridor for transporting
- 7 people and goods, and I just kind of think that's not
- 8 really the most -- I don't want to say broader way of
- 9 looking at the transportation issue here. I know
- 10 congestion is a huge problem on the other side of the
- 11 Howard Frankland Bridge and the other plans a couple
- 12 years ago regarding that bridge and extending express
- lanes or potential light rail on that bridge would be
- 14 possible, and kind of going along with those lines, I
- 15 kind of think maybe designated bus lanes would be a
- 16 little bit more appropriate for this area, mainly
- 17 because, I mean, the amount of people that you can fit
- 18 into a bus versus the amount of cars take up similar
- 19 space, it's just kind of ridiculous that people would
- 20 prefer to be in their cars. And also, especially since
- 21 there's a lot of people that come to St. Pete from the
- 22 airport, it's just kind of a shame that a lot of
- 23 visitors just really don't have a means to get around
- 24 other than by private car. And I just think that
- 25 investing in public transportation would be a better

- 1 way to serve the people of this area, especially for
- 2 these who want to stay in their cars. They wouldn't be
- 3 forced to drive in such congested situations.
- 4 That's all.
- 5 MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- 6 Our next speaker is Manuel Rodriguez.
- 7 MANUEL RODRIGUEZ
- 8 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Hi, my name is Manuel
- 9 Rodriguez. I live at 1868 76th Place North. So I
- 10 wanted to kind of talk about the human impact.
- I lived in St. Petersburg for nearly 40
- 12 years, all in the same ZIP code, 33702. I've lived in
- 13 my current home for about 20 years, and I'd like to
- 14 mention the social impact of this project, particularly
- 15 with respect to the -- to the retention pond on 76th
- 16 Place North.
- 17 The neighborhood is about 20 years old. The
- 18 neighbors moved in there about the same time. Their
- 19 kids grew up together and the neighborhood gathers to
- 20 together multiple times a year for events including
- 21 Halloween, Super Bowl, and a yearly event where we
- 22 obtain a permit to close the street for family and
- 23 neighborhood get-togethers.
- In addition to the human impact, we're
- 25 concerned about the flooding concerns and possible

- 1 flooding.
- 2 Please save our neighborhoods. Thank you.
- MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- 4 Our next speaker is Mark Calvert.
- 5 MARK CALVERT
- 6 MR. CALVERT: Mark Calvert, Tierra Verde.
- 7 I've been a frequent traveler into South Florida and
- 8 also been a frequent user of some of the managed toll
- 9 lanes in South Florida. I'd rather have a managed toll
- 10 lane than no road at all. I've been able to take
- 11 advantage of those and save significant amounts of
- 12 time. Yes, I've paid 10 or \$15 for a toll to go from
- 13 Miami to Ft. Lauderdale, but that was 24 miles. 50
- 14 cents a mile, saving half an hour or more during rush
- 15 hour, seems like a pretty good deal.
- So I'm a supporter of the managed access
- 17 lanes. And I saw many, many express buses take
- 18 advantage of those lanes as well.
- 19 Likewise, I appreciate FDOT getting ahead of
- 20 traffic congestion on 275 in Pinellas County. Unlike
- 21 Tampa and Orlando, and of course, South Florida, we
- 22 have an opportunity to solve the problem before it
- 23 becomes a big mess. And we have a great opportunity to
- 24 do that and do that quickly before growth takes over
- 25 and moves forward in construction there.

- 1 But likewise, I'm also very concerned about
- 2 some of the other access, particularly for evacuation
- for those of us that are in south Pinellas County.
- 4 We've also had some potential impact with other
- 5 residential streets such as 34th Street South and
- 6 Pasadena Avenue for lane elimination, which doesn't
- 7 help for local access and also does not help for any
- 8 evacuation needs as well.
- 9 So I'm excited that this project is being
- 10 considered and planned, and I'm -- and it's good for
- 11 evacuation, it's good for access, it will be good for
- 12 transit. Thank you. And as well as improved mobility
- 13 for everybody. Thank you.
- MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- 15 All right, our next speaker is Sharon
- 16 Calvert.
- 17 SHARON CALVERT
- 18 MS. CALVERT: I'm Sharon Calvert and I live
- in Tierra Verde and I also support the preferred bill
- 20 that will implement two managed lanes in each
- 21 direction. I believe this will be a good fit with the
- 22 Gateway Express and the improvements that will be made
- 23 to the Howard Frankland Bridge and on into Tampa.
- 24 I am also concerned. I live in Tierra Verde
- 25 and 275 is my gateway out. We need that access and

- 1 capacity for evacuation as well as just use. And I am
- 2 concerned that with some of the projects that are --
- 3 are looking to put some other roads on road diets, that
- 4 this additional access is needed. It works very
- 5 successfully in South Florida. Buses can use it; I
- 6 think even school buses can use it. So I'm looking
- 7 forward and I'm appreciative that FDOT is looking to
- 8 put this capacity in place now and not wait. Thank
- 9 you.
- 10 MR. BOGEN: Thank you.
- 11 Our next speaker is Mark Ballenger.
- 12 MARK BALLENGER
- MR. BALLENGER: My name is Mark Ballenger. I
- 14 live at 2335 64th Place North. It's a little community
- 15 of 26 home sites called the Oaks of Meadowlawn. I've
- 16 lived there about 25 years.
- 17 One of the things I want DOT to address is
- 18 the problem that expanding the road is going to have on
- 19 a particular road, 65th Place North and I-275. It
- 20 constantly floods whenever there is heavy downpours
- 21 now, so I'm kind of curious to know what DOT is going
- 22 to do to mitigate the impact of a larger road that
- 23 is -- a larger road, and now compacting the problem
- 24 there on 65th Place North.
- I also have, and many of our neighbors have

- 1 in this area some large trees that apparently it will
- 2 fall within the installation area of the noise
- 3 abatement wall, or the noise barrier wall. And we're
- 4 concerned of the damage and we need to know if FDOT is
- 5 going to engage an arborist to do a study to make sure
- 6 that these trees will not be impacted, and if they are
- 7 impacted, then they will do something to remove them
- 8 and replace them.
- And one other thing, one last thing, I'd like
- 10 for you-all to do is stop calling this an express lane.
- 11 Please call it what it is: It is a toll lane. And I
- 12 think it's confusing to many people who read this that
- 13 see it says "express lane," they are unaware it says
- 14 it's a toll lane. Thank you.
- MR. BOGEN: Thank you.
- 16 Our next speaker is Donald Wiederecht.
- 17 DONALD WIEDERECHT
- MR. WIEDERECHT: My name is Donald Wiederecht
- 19 and I own a house with Victoria Wiederecht, my wife,
- 20 and I live with two children.
- 21 We bought the house in 1996. It was a
- 22 beautiful site when we got it. There was a preserve in
- 23 the back. And we said, "This is a wonderful
- 24 neighborhood; you know, this is the perfect place to
- 25 spend the rest of your life."

- 1 And when we got the newsletter, it really
- 2 didn't go into any kind of eminent domain, and we feel
- 3 that the FDOT not sending us any type of letter is not
- 4 very good for people who live in this general area.
- 5 Because we're one of the four houses that are affected
- 6 in Meadowlawn Sawgrass. I live at 7620 19th Street
- 7 North, and we are one of the houses that are affected
- 8 by this.
- 9 I -- I know John made his point about where
- 10 the pond could go, and I -- I support that 100 percent.
- 11 I think there needs another site. I'd like to keep
- 12 this neighborhood intact. There are a lot of great
- 13 people that live in this neighborhood that are planning
- on staying in this neighborhood, and I feel that you
- 15 really could go beyond this and try to use either the
- 16 School Board site or the Meadowlawn -- the Sawgrass
- 17 Park site.
- I really believe that this is crucial that we
- 19 consider all these other options before we decide to
- 20 take houses away from people.
- 21 MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- Our next speaker is Dale Tindall.
- 23 DALE TINDALL
- MR. TINDALL: Is this it here?
- 25 MR. BOGEN: Yes, sir.

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- 1 MR. TINDALL: Yeah, I'm Dale Tindall. I live
- 2 on Los Prados Drive in Safety Harbor, Florida.
- 3 And I think -- I just looked at the green
- 4 lines back there and I think when the Gateway project
- 5 merges into the existing capacity, that the ramp is
- 6 kind of short there. I think you need to make those
- 7 longer; okay?
- 8 And then I want to share with everyone in
- 9 this group that we, in Pinellas, have paid the price
- 10 for nearly 20 years by the lack of capacity to get
- 11 through malfunction junction. And oh, by the way, when
- in FDOT's big plan is malfunction going to be fixed?
- 13 And the answer is, last.
- Now, the good news is that they're currently
- working and a year from now we will have morning rush
- 16 hour to Tampa -- it will work great. However, our
- 17 afternoon rush hour is going to be screwed for an
- 18 additional 6 to 8 to 10 years.
- 19 So I want everyone to know that they're not
- 20 going to fix malfunction junction for another 10 years.
- 21 And to me, that's their No. 1 problem and that's the
- 22 last thing they want to fix. And that just frustrates
- 23 me.
- 24 MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.
- Our next speaker is Veatrice Farrell.

- 1 VEATRICE FARRELL
- MS. FARRELL: Good evening. My name is
- 3 Veatrice Farrell. I'm here representing an
- 4 organization, the Deuces Live. It's a Main Street on
- 5 Second Street South.
- 6 First I'd like to acknowledge and thank the
- 7 FDOT representatives that were present at our May 2019
- 8 meeting.
- 9 My comments are regarding the I-275 PEE pond
- 10 sites. There are eight sites located outside of
- 11 FDOT-owned right-of-ways. One is located on
- 12 22nd Street South in St. Petersburg, 7B.
- The consensus during our general board
- 14 meeting was fierce opposition to a pond proposed on
- 15 this corridor. I am here in person because it was
- 16 suggested that that wasn't the time to make our fierce
- 17 opposition known, but to show up at the Public Meeting
- 18 and express our fierce opposition to the pond suggested
- 19 on 7B.
- The ELA mentions that there are going to be
- 21 several meetings and studies, and I would just ask that
- 22 these -- the notices regarding these studies are public
- 23 and noticed very frequently in the area so that we'll
- 24 know to show up and be in opposition to 7B. Thank you.
- MR. BOGEN: Thank you for your comment.

- 1 That was the last speaker's card that I have.
- 2 Is there anyone else who would like to make a
- 3 statement?
- 4 Seeing none, the public hearing transcript,
- 5 written statements, exhibits and reference material
- 6 will be available for public inspection at the FDOT
- 7 District 7 office at 11201 North McKinley Drive, Tampa,
- 8 Florida within three weeks.
- 9 It is approximately 7:04, and I hereby close
- 10 the formal portion of the public hearing for the Design
- 11 Change Re-Evaluation of the Interstate 275 from south
- of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North, the
- 13 Florida Department of Transportation thanks you for
- 14 attending.
- 15 Remember to be alert today, alive tomorrow.
- 16 Safety doesn't happen by accident.
- 17 Have a good evening.
- * * * * *
- 19 PRIVATE STATEMENTS
- 20 KATHY JANE WATTS
- 21 MS. WATTS: I have lived in my house for 32
- 22 years at 3923 21st Street North. I started working
- 23 hard when I was 28 years old so that my house would be
- 24 paid off when I was in my 60's. Now, when I only pay
- 25 \$648 a month mortgage and \$498 taxes a year for my

- 1 property, you guys are talking about building an
- 2 interstate and widening it, and it's going to disrupt
- 3 my life and ruin my life because I've lived in
- 4 St. Petersburg, Florida my whole entire life, except
- 5 for five years.
- 6 My parents moved me here when I was five, in
- 7 1965. I went to elementary, I went to middle school
- 8 and I went to high school and I went to college here at
- 9 St. Pete College. So you're going to get rid of a good
- 10 citizen because there's no houses I can buy for what I
- 11 have. And it's almost paid off. And that's sad. And
- 12 I work in Tampa, so I'm up there every day.
- 13 And this is breaking my heart because you
- 14 just destroyed my dreams of 32 years. I raised my
- 15 daughter in that house. I brought her home from
- 16 Bayfront. She went to school here. I mean, there's a
- 17 lot of history. And it's sad. And you're not going to
- 18 give me enough money to even come close to what I have
- 19 now. All I'm going to do is have to start over while
- 20 you open up expressways that make billions.
- 21 So that's how I feel. And I wanted you to
- 22 know that you've broken my heart.
- 23 MIKE CORSON
- 24 MR. CORSON: My name is Michael Corson,
- 25 C-o-r-s-o-n. I live at 4600 Xenia Street North,

- 1 St. Petersburg, Florida.
- 2 And I think that the eminent domain that's
- 3 looming over all of us that have houses that are going
- 4 to be taken is unnecessary. It seems like there are
- 5 other sites that are more viable. And just from -- you
- 6 know, it's better to go with those sites than to take
- 7 people's houses. That doesn't seem like there is much
- 8 of a benefit when there are other options. Thank you.
- 9 (The comments and meeting were closed at 7:30)
- 10 * * * * *
- 11 SLIDE PRESENTATION
- 12 SLIDE 1: The Florida Department of
- 13 Transportation, or F-D-O-T, welcomes you to the Public
- 14 Hearing for the Design Change Re-Evaluation of the
- 15 Interstate 275, or I-275, Project Development and
- 16 Environment, or PD&E, Study.
- 17 SLIDE 2: This meeting is being conducted to
- 18 provide interested citizens an opportunity to ask
- 19 questions and offer comments about the alternative
- 20 being proposed for this project. This study satisfies
- 21 the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and
- 22 other applicable policies, regulations, and procedures.
- 23 This project complies with non-discrimination laws and
- 24 regulations. Public participation is solicited without
- 25 regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex,

- 1 religion, disability, or family status. For the full
- 2 list of federal and state requirements, please see the
- 3 citation board located at the sign-in table.
- 4 SLIDE 3: We are here tonight to discuss the
- 5 current Design Change Re-Evaluation for I-275 from
- 6 south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North
- 7 in Pinellas County, Florida. The Work Program Item, or
- 8 WPI, Segment number for this project is 424501-1. To
- 9 better describe the transportation needs, the study
- 10 corridor is divided into three unique segments:
- 11 Segment A is from south of 54th Avenue South to I-175,
- 12 a distance of 4.6 miles; Segment B is from I-175 to
- 13 south of Gandy Boulevard, a distance of 6.0 miles; and
- 14 Segment C is from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of
- 15 4th Street North, a distance of 5.7 miles.
- 16 SLIDE 4: The project presented tonight is
- 17 part of Tampa Bay Next, which is a program to modernize
- 18 our region's transportation infrastructure and prepare
- 19 for the future. The goal of Tampa Bay Next is to
- 20 improve safety and mobility through innovation,
- 21 collaboration, and community engagement in the region.
- 22 The program includes projects to modernize the
- 23 interstates of I-4, I-275 and I-75 in Pinellas and
- 24 Hillsborough Counties, and is looking at ways to
- 25 integrate transit, bicycle and pedestrian

- 1 opportunities.
- 2 SLIDE 5: The purpose of the original PD&E
- 3 Study and subsequent re-evaluations is to provide
- 4 documented environmental and engineering analysis that
- 5 will help the FDOT Office of Environmental Management,
- 6 or OEM, reach a decision on the type, conceptual
- 7 design, and location of the necessary improvements
- 8 within the I-275 study limits. The proposed
- 9 improvements are needed to improve existing operational
- 10 deficiencies on I-275, address present and future
- 11 traffic congestion, and maintain mobility for freight
- 12 and goods movement along a regionally significant
- 13 transportation corridor. The proposed improvements are
- 14 intended to enhance safety and address future travel
- 15 demands to accommodate anticipated growth in Pinellas
- 16 County and the region.
- 17 SLIDE 6: The original PD&E Study began in
- 18 2012 and concluded with approval of the Type II
- 19 Categorical Exclusion, or Type II CE, in July 2016.
- 20 The 2017 Design Change Re-Evaluation was approved in
- 21 April 2017. The current Design Change Re-Evaluation
- 22 began in August 2018. The following slides provide
- 23 more details.
- 24 SLIDE 7: The original PD&E Study evaluated
- 25 the need for interchange safety and operational

- 1 improvements including lane continuity improvements to
- 2 provide two continuous general use lanes in Segments A
- 3 and B. The original PD&E Study also evaluated the
- 4 addition of two express lanes in Segment C. Following
- 5 a public hearing in September 2015, the Federal Highway
- 6 Administration, or FHWA, approved the Type II
- 7 Categorical Exclusion, or Type II CE, in July 2016 for
- 8 these improvements.
- 9 SLIDE 8: The 2017 Design Change
- 10 Re-Evaluation evaluated repurposing the approved
- 11 express lanes within Segment C to accommodate three
- 12 general purpose lanes, one auxiliary lane, and one
- 13 express lane in each direction from south of Dr. Martin
- 14 Luther King, Jr. Boulevard North to north of 4th Street
- 15 North. The 2017 re-evaluation was approved by the FDOT
- 16 Office of Environmental Management in April 2017.
- 17 SLIDE 8: The current Design Change
- 18 Re-Evaluation is evaluating impacts of further changes
- 19 to the approved PD&E Study, including the addition of
- 20 two express lanes from I-375 to Gandy Boulevard in
- 21 Segment B and the addition of a second express lane
- 22 from Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North in
- 23 Segment C. Additionally, the re-evaluation is
- 24 addressing changes to the Gateway Expressway
- 25 Interchange and Gandy Boulevard Interchange, new trail

- 1 connections between the Howard Frankland Bridge,
- 2 Ulmerton Road, and 4th Street North, replacement of the
- 3 4th Street North ramp bridges over Big Island Gap, and
- 4 pond sites along the entire corridor.
- 5 SLIDE 9: Within Segment B from I-375 to
- 6 Gandy Boulevard, the Current Preferred Build
- 7 Alternative adds two buffer-separated express lanes in
- 8 each direction. The new express lanes are accommodated
- 9 by widening within current right-of-way limits. The
- 10 widening will occur in the median and to the outside of
- 11 the existing pavement. This alternative includes
- 12 12-foot-wide paved outside shoulders to allow for
- 13 bus-on-shoulder operations.
- 14 SLIDE 10: Within Segment C, the Current
- 15 Preferred Build Alternative adds one additional
- 16 buffer-separated express lane in each direction. The
- 17 express lanes are accommodated by widening within
- 18 current right-of-way limits. The widening will occur
- 19 in the median and to the outside of the existing
- 20 pavement. Throughout this segment, the extent of inside
- 21 and outside widening varies to reduce conflicts with
- joints between new and existing pavement.
- 23 SLIDE 12: The Current Preferred Build
- 24 Alternative improves ramp connections to southbound
- 25 I-275 from Gandy Boulevard. The two southbound

- 1 on-ramps from westbound and eastbound Gandy Boulevard
- 2 will be combined, creating a single access to
- 3 southbound I-275.
- 4 SLIDE 13: The Current Preferred Build
- 5 Alternative provides additional connectivity at the
- 6 Gateway Expressway Interchange. New direct express
- 7 lane connections will be provided between the Gateway
- 8 Expressway and I-275 via new flyover ramps that enter
- 9 and exit I-275 from the median.
- 10 SLIDE 14: The Current Preferred Build
- 11 Alternative includes replacement of the 4th Street North
- 12 ramp bridges over Big Island Gap. Bridge replacement
- 13 will accommodate the trail connection.
- 14 SLIDE 15: The Current Preferred Build
- 15 Alternative also includes a new 12-foot-wide trail
- 16 along the west/north side of I-275. The trail connects
- 17 from the proposed trail on the Howard Frankland Bridge
- 18 south to 4th Street North and west to Ulmerton Road. On
- 19 the causeway, the trail will be separated from travel
- 20 lanes by a concrete barrier and railing.
- 21 SLIDE 16: This re-evaluation included an
- 22 evaluation of impacts and locations of pond sites to
- 23 meet drainage and stormwater requirements. Pond sites
- 24 will be needed to accommodate new impervious surfaces
- 25 due to widening to provide express lanes. Several of

- 1 these pond site locations may be outside of the
- 2 existing right-of-way. FDOT is working with the City
- of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, and the Southwest
- 4 Florida Water Management District through a separate
- 5 Environmental Look-Around process to identify regional
- 6 water quality improvements or joint use projects that
- 7 could result in the reduction of the number of pond
- 8 sites or reduce pond sizes.
- 9 SLIDE 17: The original PD&E Study looked at
- 10 various environmental and engineering factors in the
- 11 alternative analysis including construction costs and
- 12 right-of-way needs, as well as impacts to natural and
- 13 cultural resources, and the social and physical
- 14 environment. The current Design Change Re-Evaluation
- 15 evaluated the changes to those impacts related to the
- 16 proposed improvements considered as part of the Current
- 17 Preferred Build Alternative.
- 18 SLIDE 18: The natural resources assessed as
- 19 part of this re-evaluation included wetlands and
- 20 surface waters, seagrasses, and protected species and
- 21 habitat. The addition of express lanes and a trail in
- 22 Segment C resulted in 1.424 acres of seagrass impacts.
- 23 Improvements proposed throughout the project corridor
- 24 resulted in 5.17 acres of wetland impacts.
- 25 SLIDE 19: Section 106 (one-oh-six) of the

- 1 National Historic Preservation Act requires agencies to
- 2 consider the effects of their actions on historic
- 3 properties. There are 17 historic resources in the
- 4 project area that are either listed on the National
- 5 Register of Historic Places or considered eligible for
- 6 listing. There are no anticipated adverse effects on
- 7 any of the identified historic resources.
- 8 Slide 20: To accommodate the anticipated
- 9 pond sites, additional right-of-way may be needed. 28
- 10 parcels may be affected and 16 residences may require
- 11 relocation. FDOT staff is available today to speak
- 12 with you about the right-of-way process or you can
- 13 visit the FDOT Right-of-Way website for more
- 14 information.
- 15 SLIDE 21: Traffic noise from the proposed
- 16 improvements is expected to impact properties along the
- 17 corridor. FDOT is committed to constructing additional
- 18 noise barriers where feasible during the construction
- 19 phase of the project.
- 20 SLIDE 22: This draft evaluation matrix
- 21 compares the impacts associated with the Previously
- 22 Approved Alternative, from the PD&E Study or 2017
- 23 re-evaluation, with the Current Preferred Build
- 24 Alternative. The evaluation included anticipated
- 25 impacts, such as environmental resources and

- 1 right-of-way, as well as the estimated cost to acquire
- 2 right-of-way needed for pond sites and to construct the
- 3 project. Please refer to the display board for more
- 4 information about impacts to environmental resources
- 5 and right-of-way.
- 6 SLIDE 23: Right-of-Way Acquisition is funded
- 7 for the pond sites in Fiscal Year 2022 for Segments A
- 8 and B. Design and Construction is partially funded for
- 9 Segments A and B in Fiscal Year 2024.
- 10 SLIDE 25: The Current Re-evaluation began in
- 11 August 2018 and the evaluation and preparation of
- 12 environmental documents for public review was completed
- over the past year. In addition to tonight's public
- 14 hearing, we have conducted numerous small group
- 15 meetings with neighborhood groups along the I-275
- 16 corridor and have coordinated with local and state
- 17 review agencies, including Forward Pinellas, the
- 18 County's Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- 19 Following tonight's hearing, the study team will review
- 20 all public input, finalize the documents and submit to
- 21 the Office of Environmental Management for review and
- 22 final approval, which is anticipated in winter
- 23 2019/2020.
- 24 SLIDE 25: Project documents are available
- 25 for review on the project website, or at the Barbara S

- 1 Ponce Public Library located at 7770 52nd Street North
- 2 in Pinellas Park and at the FDOT District Seven office
- 3 located at 11201 North McKinley Drive in Tampa. The
- 4 documents have been on display since September 4th and
- 5 will be on display until October 4th.
- 6 SLIDE 26: There are several ways to make a
- 7 comment as part of the public hearing record. You can
- 8 speak directly to the court reporter who is here this
- 9 evening. The court reporter will also record verbatim
- 10 the comments stated during the formal portion of the
- 11 public hearing, which begins at 6:30 p.m. An FDOT
- 12 representative will be moderating the formal public
- 13 comment portion and may limit speaking times. Please
- 14 complete a speaker card and give it to a representative
- 15 at the sign-in table to indicate your interest to speak
- 16 publicly. You may also complete a comment form and
- 17 drop it in one of the comment boxes or mail written
- 18 comments to the address provided on the back of the
- 19 form. Comment forms are available at the comment table.
- 20 All comments must be received or postmarked by Friday,
- 21 October 4, 2019 to become part of the public hearing
- 22 record. All comments received, regardless of how they
- 23 were submitted, will be reviewed and considered.
- 24 SLIDE 27: Thank you for attending tonight's
- 25 public hearing for the I-275 Design Change

Page 37 Re-Evaluation. We appreciate your participation. Remember to be alert today. Alive tomorrow. Safety doesn't happen by accident.

Executive Reporting Service

	Page 38
1	CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER
2	
3	STATE OF FLORIDA
4	COUNTY OF PINELLAS
5	
6	I, KELLEY N. SIMPSON, RPR, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically
7	report the Public Hearing and Comments held before
8	Florida Department of Transportation; and that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record of my
9	stenographic notes.
10	I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney, or counsel of the parties, nor
11	am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.
12	
13	DATED this 2nd day of October, 2019, at Pinellas County, Florida.
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15	ADIC₄
16	Keller Som osm
17	Kelley N. Simpson, RPR
18	Refley IV. BimpBoil, Rik
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