

Meeting Minutes

Date	August 21, 2023	Meeting Date	August 2, 2023
Project	International Drive (I-Drive) Pedestrian Bridge Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study		
Subject	Recommended Improvement Concept Public Meeting		
Attendees	See Below		
Location	Embassy Suites 8250 Jamaican Court Orlando, Florida	Prepared By	Rick Baldocchi, P.E. Christine Dellert
Distribution	Public Website		

Attendees:

Blanche Hardy, Orange County
Rick Baldocchi, AVON
Michael Chatham, HHCP
Commissioner Mayra Uribe, District 3
Hatem Aguib, FDOT
Todd Alexander, FDOT
Pam Allard, Walgreens
Jaz Arsenaut, Community Member
Michael Beksinski, Herc Rentals
David Bottomley, Community Member
Luann Brooks, I-Drive District
Catalina Chacon, FDOT
Evan Collins, Fox 35
Ryan Flipse, FDOT

Frank Gilbert, Community Member
Evan Fracasso, Hilton Orlando
Nicole Griffin, Spectrum News 13
Eric Grimmer, Orlando Yimby
Kent Hipp, GrayRobinson
Seta Koroitamudu, FDOT
Chris Krul, Spectrum News 13
Deonte Moore, Orange County
Chris Mueller, Hilton Orlando
Ian Phyers, Orange County
Brian Sanders, Orange County
Craig Swygert, Clear Channel Orlando
Rick Vallier, Orange County
Alberto Vargas, Orange County

The Recommended Improvement Concept public meeting provided further details on the International Drive Pedestrian Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study, including a presentation of the recommended design concept and aesthetics, as well as an opportunity to solicit comments from the public. A summary of the meeting discussion is below.

Blanche Hardy introduced the purpose of the meeting and shared a PowerPoint presentation with information on the overpass study and its work to date. The project has the support of Orange County leadership, including Mayor Demings and Commissioner Mike Scott for District 6, which the area of study is in. Blanche introduced Commissioner Uribe, who was in attendance and reaffirmed the project's importance to Orange County.

Blanche shared several ways to provide feedback on the project, including comment and speaker cards, the contact information for the project manager, and the website address. She also introduced several Orange County staff members and project consultants.

Blanche introduced Michael Chatham with HHCP to provide additional background and present the recommended improvement concept.

1. Recap of Project Work and Prior Project Advisory Group Meetings
 - a. Michael shared the objectives of the four prior meetings of the Project Advisory Group (PAG), including discussing the problems at the site, collecting additional input from the public, and different design concepts, constructability, and cost for the pedestrian overpass.
 - b. The team has taken the PAG's preferred scheme and designed it further to present as the recommended improvement concept for the overpass.
 - c. Michael reviewed a summary of the results from the prior PAG meetings, including:
 - i. A decision to include a barrier at intersections to prevent on-grade crossing.
 - ii. Utilize stair and elevator at each intersection (the best option for each corner).
 - iii. Minimize the impact on existing utilities and on adjacent property owners.
 - iv. Create an iconic gateway to the Convention and Entertainment District.
 - v. Consider potential bridge connections to adjacent properties (both elevated and on grade).
 - vi. Consider the experience of those traveling under the bridge, as those experiencing the bridge by crossing it.
 - vii. A design that accommodates pedestrians, strollers, and bicycles.
 - viii. ADA accessibility at all intersections.
 - ix. Consider the Intersecting "C" option and the "X" option as the highest-ranking and preferred schemes.
 - x. Identify the "drone" scheme as the preferred option.
 - d. Michael showed a map of the project location at the intersection of Sand Lake Road and International Drive with planning that would consider future design improvements to Interstate 4.
 - e. Michael shared several of the early design configurations for the pedestrian bridge, including a square, an "X," a circular bridge, a "C" configuration, an intersecting "C," and an "I" configuration.
 - f. Michael shared the selected tower configuration option, which includes an elevator and switchback staircase at each intersection.
 - g. Michael said the "X" and Intersecting "C" design concepts scored high on the project team's criteria, which included travel distance, walking distance, and length.
 - h. The curved bridge offered a more dynamic walking experience.
 - i. The project would have barriers on grade to keep people from crossing and to protect pedestrians on the corner.
 - j. Michael said based on budget, operational, and iconic criteria the "drone" scheme was the preferred design concept.
2. The Drone Concept
 - a. Michael shared an aerial design view of the "drone" concept for the pedestrian bridge. The team has not come across another bridge in this configuration—it is unique and efficiently solves the challenges of this project.
 - b. Michael shared a series of views of the bridge design from different directions because it has a different experience from each direction. The bridge is designed to be an iconic gateway from I-4 to International Drive.
 - c. The project team wants to use lighting under the canopy. There will not be digital graphics or readable text. Another lighting feature will be in the elevator towers, to also function as a safety feature.

- d. The barrier on the ground will be a concrete vehicular barrier. The top portion of the barrier could be metal mesh, glass, or acrylic.
 - e. The project team is considering a photovoltaic array on the top of the bridge to promote sustainability and help to power the bridge's lighting.
 - f. Michael also showed several illustrations of what the bridge experience could like from the point of view of pedestrians crossing it. The paths will be curved; the sides will be covered with a metal mesh.
 - g. Michael shared an animated video flyover of the design concepts and what the project would like from different angles.
3. Public Comment and Questions
- a. **Question (David Bottomley):** What happens when one or more of the elevators break and someone is in a wheelchair?
 - i. Blanche says there will be four elevators installed on the bridge and it will be a very robust project. Michael says it is stable, proven technology for the elevators, which will only be traveling one floor up and down. The project team is discussing maintenance and operations plans with the County. Blanche said the team has closely worked with Orange County's emergency services and the project will be built to emergency services' criteria for evaluation with their equipment.
 - b. **Question (David Bottomley):** Will the barriers be high enough to keep people from crossing at the street level? Instead of 42" high for the barrier, would you consider 48" high like in zoos?
 - i. Blanche says the barriers will extend to the nearest driveway and the project team has taken considerations to make them not easily scalable. If someone does try to climb, the hope would be that security services on site would take the appropriate action; but police will not be 24/7 and you cannot stop someone if they desire to take dangerous action. Michael says they have done similar projects with similar barrier systems and have not had a problem. The goal is to make the bridge as easy to use as possible.
 - c. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** Why is the bridge going to be in the middle of the intersection instead of being put further down the road?
 - i. Michael says if you make people walk a further distance down the road, they will be less likely to use it.
 - d. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** Could you enclose the sidewalks to help funnel people to the appropriate directions?
 - i. Blanche says there are business entrances from the sidewalks that cannot be blocked. Blanche also described the dangerous conditions at the intersection where pedestrians were trying to cross the street as traffic is crossing in between them.
 - e. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** How will the bridge withstand windy conditions?
 - i. Michael says the bridge will be designed for 140 mph winds.
 - f. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** How large will the elevators be?
 - i. Michael said the elevators will be large enough to accommodate a stretcher for emergency services; 3,500-lb elevators that could hold about a dozen people. Blanche says they will be sized to hold an emergency response crew.
 - g. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** How long will the lighting on the bridge last?
 - i. Michael says all the lighting will be LED lighting. Blanche says the bridge and structures will be maintained by the County and the I-Drive District and well-cared for.

- h. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** How will the mesh keep people from throwing things off the bridge onto the cars below?
 - i. Michael says the bridge will meet the FDOT requirements, which include a cage on the bridge so that items cannot be thrown below.
- i. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** Why not put the traffic lights underneath the bridge instead of on their own poles?
 - i. Blanche says the project is following FDOT criteria for all lights and signage. Michael says the mast arms for the lights already exist.
- j. **Comment (Eric Grimmer):** Against this bridge because it is not a scalable solution for pedestrian safety, and it does not address the pedestrian experience at the next intersection. This bridge is an extremely car-focused infrastructure because the pedestrians will have to walk a longer distance now so that the cars can maintain speed. The taxpayers will be paying for the project and maintenance.
- k. **Question (Eric Grimmer):** How is this bridge consistent with the comprehensive plan update that focuses on building places for people, not places for cars? And how is it consistent with the County's Vision 0 pledge to achieve 0 traffic fatalities, and to build a complete street?
 - i. Blanche says the project was always part of the plan; this was a part of the 2030 plan, and the vision for this project was put in place nearly 15 years ago. This bridge has always been a bicyclist and pedestrian project; it was never considered to be an enhancement for traffic. The barrier walls will prevent pedestrians from crossing; the cross walks will be removed to be a much safer situation for pedestrians and bicyclists. It was not intended to enhance the vehicle experience. The project is meant to be iconic and represent the County; to become part of complete streets and character.
- l. **Comment (Eric Grimmer):** The corridor is a hostile place to pedestrians and the area should be known for more iconic places than a bridge.
- m. **Comment (David Bottomley):** Has been looking at what the national parks have done with the sizes of metal mesh on barriers to avoid anything getting through.
- n. **Question (Jaz Arsenaut):** What about the possibility of a light rail or elevated moving sidewalks to help with pedestrian traffic and safety?
 - i. Blanche says the County has been working on transit lanes and is working with Lynx on I-Drive transit.