

**Meeting Minutes**

Date	March 5, 2023	Meeting Date	February 22, 2023
Project	International Drive (I-Drive) Pedestrian Bridge Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study		
Subject	Alternatives Public Meeting		
Participants	See Below		
Location	Lake Buena Vista High School Cafeteria (11305 Daryl Carter Parkway, Orlando, FL 32836)	Prepared By	Rick Baldocchi, P.E. Christine Dellert
Distribution	Public Website		

**Attendees:**

Commissioner Mike Scott, Orange County  
Blanche Hardy, Orange County  
Rick Baldocchi, AVCON  
Michael Chatham, HHCP  
Chris Atcachunas, Atcachunas Law  
Micah Bass, 7200 Wyndham  
Lucas Boyce, I-Drive CRA  
Luann Brooks, I-Drive District  
Russ Dagon, Universal Orlando  
Michelle Frank, Orange County  
Carter Gresham, Orange County  
Brenda Hampton, McDonald's Corp.

Stacy Huber, International Square  
Guamay Martell, Telemundo  
Deonte Moore, Orange County  
Tabitha Moore, International Square  
Renzo Nastasi, Orange County  
Carmen Petersen, I-Drive CRA  
Clint Pletzer, AVCON  
Ian Phyers, Orange County  
Brian Sanders, Orange County  
Krista Taraszewski, Orange County  
Thuy Thach, Travel Lodge

The Alternatives Public Meeting provided background and project details on the International Drive Pedestrian Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study, including work to date and the preferred bridge concepts for the overpass. The meeting organizers also solicited 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. This included:

1. Project Introduction and Feedback
  - a. 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. Commissioner Scott is with the group this evening.
  - b. There are several ways for the public to provide feedback on the project, including project manager contact information, speaker cards, public comment forms, and the project website.

- c. The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer period, and anyone who would like to receive a newsletter should provide their address to be included on the mailing list.
  - d. Blanche introduced Michael Chatham with HHCP to provide additional project background, goals, and the alternative design concepts that have been developed with input from the Project Advisory Group (PAG).
  - e. The PAG is made up of business representatives in the surrounding project area, county representatives, emergency first responders, the Convention Center, and FDOT. Three PAG meetings have been held to date to discuss project objectives, existing conditions, and preliminary bridge concepts and preferred directions. At the next meeting, the team expects to show the renderings and refined design for the bridge.
  - f. Michael reviewed the diverging diamond interchange design at I-4 and Sand Lake Road and traffic conditions and the impact it would have on this project. He referenced the project location at the intersection of Sand Lake Road and International Drive, with businesses on each corner of the intersection.
  - g. Michael reviewed several of the project's challenges, including:
    - i. Utility impacts
    - ii. Right-of-way
    - iii. Access impacts
    - iv. Visibility impacts
    - v. Traffic speed impacts
    - vi. ADA accessibility
    - vii. Fire and rescue access and parking
    - viii. Pedestrian travel
    - ix. Security
  - h. Michael also provided an average daily traffic count at the intersection: 28,000 AADT on W Sand Lake Road (west side of intersection); 36,500 AADT on W Sand Lake Road (east side of the intersection); and 22,500 AADT on International Drive.
  - i. A 5-, 10-, and 15-minute walking radius map showed the areas and businesses that could be impacted by this project.
2. Project Goals
- a. Provide pedestrians safe crossing to all four intersections;
  - b. Create an iconic gateway to the I-Drive Entertainment and Convention Center District;
  - c. Improve vehicular capacity at the intersection;
  - d. Minimize the impact on adjacent property owners;
  - e. Enhance the pedestrian nature of the district;
  - f. Provide ADA accessibility at bridge connections;
  - g. Make the experience of using the bridge positive, memorable, and "Instagram-able;" and
  - h. Utilize lighting to enhance the experience and safety of the bridge at night.
  - i. As part of this study, the team documented many dangerous interactions at the intersection, including people on foot and bicycle trying to cross the street around cars. Michael showed a series of pictures of these interactions taken in one hour.
  - j. Every day, there are eight fatalities and 49 serious injuries on Florida roadways. As you slow cars down, the number of fatalities and serious incidents are reduced. This project would eliminate the ability to cross on grade and make everyone on foot use the bridge. The project target speed for the roadway below has not yet been determined.
  - k. Michael shared photos of iconic gateways in other geographic locations and talked about the need to create a link between the image of the bridge and what is happening on International Drive.

### 3. Vertical Circulation

- a. The team studied different methods of vertical circulation on all four corners, including ramps, elevators, stairs, and escalators and reviewed the advantages and disadvantages to each, including the travel distance, power and maintenance, footprint, whether it is a visual obstacle, and accessibility.
- b. Every corner must have accessible access and emergency egress.
- c. The team created a scoring matrix of advantages and disadvantages and determined that either a ramp or a stair and escalator combination at each corner would meet all project requirements.
- d. Michael also showed a series of maps with dense utility locations on the site and at each corner, which the team would need to consider in design.
- e. Michael said the team also considered the visibility impact of vertical circulation. If placed in the right of way, they would block the businesses' visibility to the public and hinder the cars turning at the intersection. By eliminating the crosswalks, the walk strips could be moved closer to the intersection to improve visibility.
- f. Michael showed a modified design of a platform, staircase, and elevator that allows users to walk directly onto the corner properties. He also showed an alternative design with stairs wrapped around the elevator and direct access to the properties. Any of the designs with the stair and elevator combination could be utilized, depending upon what fits best on each corner.
- g. Michael also showed a conceptual design with a ramp that covers the entire side of a corner property and said that is one of the reasons the team does not consider this a preferred option.

### 4. Preliminary Bridge Concepts

- a. The first bridge concept the team explored was a square configuration, as well as a circular configuration. The circulation configuration was the longest and had the longest walking distance.
- b. Another option the team explored was a "C" configuration, but this configuration does not connect all four corners equally.
- c. The team also provided and explored an "I" configuration (and a modified version) for the bridge.
- d. One of the preferred configurations for the bridge was an "X" configuration.
- e. The other preferred option was an intersecting "C" bridge, which is the shortest of all the options and has the shortest average travel distance. This configuration also provides an opportunity for a unique crossing experience because of the curved section and maximizes the views to the surrounding area and businesses. Michael showed a series of conceptual images of this design.
- f. Michael showed a scoring matrix with bridge criteria and each configuration, which includes travel distances, average walking distance, and bridge length. The highest-ranking option is the intersecting "C" configuration.
- g. The results of the PAG's work to date include:
  - i. The highest-ranked and preferred concepts included the intersecting "C" and "X" concepts.
  - ii. The project would utilize stairs and elevators or ramp at each intersection (best option for each corner).
  - iii. The project will minimize the impact on existing utilities and on adjacent property owners.
  - iv. The project will create an iconic gateway to the Convention and Entertainment District.

- v. The project will consider potential bridge connections to adjacent properties, both elevated and on grade.
  - vi. The project will consider the experience of those traveling under the bridge, as well as those experiencing the bridge by crossing it.
  - vii. The bridge design should consider pedestrians, strollers, and bicyclists.
  - viii. ADA accessibility is critical at all corners.
  - ix. The team will further develop the two preferred alternatives (intersecting “C” and “X”).
- h. Michael also shared several summary points as the team continues their work:
- i. Curved bridge configurations create a more dynamic visual and a better experience for bridge users.
  - ii. The elimination of the crosswalks will increase pedestrian safety and reduce traffic congestion.
  - iii. The team intends to put in barriers at the intersections that will keep people from crossing, and corner wrapping or seat walls will be required to prevent people from attempting to cross the intersection at grade.
  - iv. The bridge configuration has little impact on space required at intersection corners.
  - v. The team is seeking input on the preferred configuration to meet the operational, aesthetic, budget, and iconic gateway criteria.
- i. Michael showed overhead design concepts of the bridge configurations that included photovoltaic panels in the center to help with powering lighting features. As part of these designs, Michael showed two curved bridge sections with a connection in the middle as a possible modified “X” configuration.
- j. The team will provide animations and renderings of bridge designs at the next meeting.
5. Public Questions and Comments
- a. **Question:** How will security be handled on the bridge?
    - i. Michael said the bridge will have security cameras and the team has met with OCSO and Fire Rescue about their patrol of the bridge. The elevators will be glass so that people will be able to see in and out as a passive safety measure. The bridge may have a roof to protect pedestrians from weather. The elevators and shafts will be lit.
  - b. **Question:** Was pedestrian traffic studied and which intersections were traveled the most, and to which destination?
    - i. Michael said the majority of traffic is going north and south on International Drive. Rick Baldocchi said the team is working on an analysis of the intersection that includes the pedestrian count and modeling the intersection with and without the crosswalk, and will share this data with FDOT.
  - c. **Question:** What is the anticipated date of construction?
    - i. Blanche said past conceptual analyses have led the County to this point of a design concept study and ability to construct the bridge. The intention is to bring the concepts back to the PAG in the next 4-6 weeks and then bring the proposed alternative design to a public meeting for additional comments and feedback. A recommended alternative would then go to the local planning agency and to the Board of County Commissioners’ work sessions. The project would then go into public hearings with the Board of County Commissioners. At the end of the public hearings, the project team will ask the BCC to approve this study and for permission to design and construct this structure. A significant portion of the funding is in place through the CRA, as well as requests for federal and state

funding. Blanche said the hope is to see activity within 5 years. The County project team will go to the Board for approvals sometime this summer; it takes 6 months to hire a designer; will be in design for 2 years, which includes negotiating with the property owners for right of way acquisition; it will take 6 months to hire a contractor to construct the bridge; that leaves another year and a half for construction. For a transportation project of this size that is very fast.

- d. **Question:** So, 5 years is a minimum for construction? What are the taxpayers getting? What about the millions of dollars put into this project if the property owners or the County Commissioners do not agree to move forward?
    - i. Blanche says this was a conceptual project for many years but did not have an engineering firm or architects under contract to study the components of this bridge. The project is being funded through the CRA.
    - ii. Renzo Nastasi said the first attempt to address this overpass did not go to the County Commissioners because the County could not get the property owners to agree. This is the first time that the County has a consultant on board to go through this feasibility study. The project has to go through the BCC for its approval, and the County will still have to negotiate with the property owners. This study is the first one and it costs \$600,000.
  - e. **Question:** How much funding already is earmarked for this?
    - i. Renzo Nastasi says there is a line item in the CRA that identifies this project. The County also is in the process of applying for federal grants for the project, including matching grants. The dollars collected in the CRA are spent within the CRA by statute.
  - f. **Question:** Can you show us any of the agreements with the property owners at the four corners?
    - i. Renzo Nastasi says final agreements will be public.
    - ii. Rick says that the team cannot negotiate with the property owners yet because it needs to get to a level of design to identify how much right of way would be needed. Part of this study is to finalize those lines to provide to the County so it can enter into negotiation.
  - g. **Question:** Are you studying subterranean?
    - i. Rick and Michael said they are, but the utilities would be a much larger challenge if they went subterranean.
6. Final Comments
- a. Blanche reminded people to ensure they have signed up for the mailing list and to look for project updates on the website, including materials from this meeting.