

## Meeting Minutes

Date	June 29, 2023	Meeting Date	June 12, 2023
Project Name	International Drive (I-Drive) Pedestrian Bridge Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study	Project #:	
Subject	Project Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting #4		
Participants	See Below		
Location	Embassy Suites 8250 Jamaican Court Orlando, FL 32819	Prepared By	Rick Baldocchi, P.E. Christine Dellert
Distribution	Meeting Participants		

- Introduction of Participants**

Blanche Hardy, Orange County	Hazem El-Assar, Orange County
Rick Baldocchi, AVON	Rob Herrick, Universal Orlando
Michael Chatham, HHCP	Donald Huber, International Square Inc.
Anmber Ayub, Orange County	Tabitha Moore, International Square Inc.
Marcos Bastian, Orange County	Chris Mueller, Hilton Orlando
Richard Bilbao, OBJ	Carmen Petersen, Universal Orlando
Loreen Bobo, FDOT District 5	Jeffrey Reyes, Orange County
Luann Brooks, I-Drive District	Brian Sanders, Orange County
Fernando Ching, Rosen Hotels & Resorts	Craig Swygert, Clear Channel Orlando
Kristen Darby, Visit Orlando	Krista Taraszewski, Orange Co Convention Center
Megan Dowdy, Dowdy Realty	Alberto Vargas, Orange County
RJ Dowdy, Dowdy Realty	Scott Workman, Orange County Fire Rescue

The fourth Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting provided further details on the International Drive Pedestrian Overpass Intersection Analysis and Overpass Conceptual Design Study, including a presentation of the two preferred bridge concepts and discussion of refined aesthetics, as well an opportunity to solicit final comments from group members. 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 Michael Chatham with HHCP to provide additional background since the PAG met last. The PAG is made up of businesses representations in the surrounding area, County representatives, emergency first responders, the Convention Center, and FDOT.

## 1. Recap of Prior PAG Meetings

- a. Michael shared a summary of results from the first three 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.
- b. Michael also shared the four bridge configurations the group had previously discussed: a square configuration, an “X” configuration, a circular configuration, a “C” configuration, an Intersecting “C” confirmation, and an “I” configuration.
- c. The selected bridge configuration for each intersection is an elevator and a stair that would provide elevated or on-grade connections to the properties on the corners.
- d. Michael shared 3D studies of the two preferred schemes: the “X” configuration and the Intersecting “C” confirmation. He noted that one of the negatives of the “X” is that the travel path is longer than some of the other configurations; the Intersecting “C” has slightly shorter walking distances and a curve for a more interesting user experience.
- e. Each of the configuration options was ranked by travel distance, walking distance, and bridge length, and the “X” and Intersecting “C” configurations were among the higher-ranked options.

## 2. Bridge Design Concepts

- a. Michael introduced **“The Drone Concept”** as the first bridge design scheme, named because it resembles a drone. It is an offshoot of the Intersecting “C” design. It features a shallow curved canopy where the two bridge sections come together and could be used for photovoltaic arrays to power elements of the bridge. The canopy also could have a digital arch component that could be used for signage or artistic expression.
- b. Michael showed a series of daytime and evening renderings of the Drone design concept from different directions. Travelers from the east or west on Sand Lake Road would see elevator towers illuminated at night.
- c. Staircases wrap around in five-foot elevation sections to be more inviting for users.
- d. Michael shared a video of the concept to help attendees virtually experience what this bridge design would be like.

- e. Michael introduced a second bridge design concept, “**The Wave Concept**,” which incorporates two “C’s” that do not intersect and have a free-flowing wave form in the middle. The corners are the same in this scheme, but the roofs in this scheme cover the elevator access ways.
  - f. Michael showed a series of daytime and evening renderings of the Wave design concept from different directions.
  - g. One of the biggest differences in these schemes is the structural strategies of the bridges. An intersection in the middle of the Wave design is created that people can walk through on the bridge. Internal illumination would be featured inside the elevator shafts in the Wave design, as well.
3. Bridge Aesthetics
- a. Michael introduced Alberto Vargas from Orange County to discuss bridge aesthetics with the PAG members.
  - b. Alberto said the bridge would provide pedestrian and traffic safety and a memorable gateway to International Drive.
  - c. The County has reviewed the technical aspects of the designs and the components of the horizontal and vertical structures and said County staff decided the Wave is their preferred option.
4. PAG Discussion and Questions
- a. **Question (RJ Dowdy):** Why was the “X” configuration not presented in today’s bridge schema after we asked for it to be brought back up during the last meeting?
    - i. Michael said there were very few differences between them and said the design connects all four corners with an intersection in the middle. An “X” design did not reflect the iconic bridge objective, and the curve creates a more interesting walking experience for people using the bridge.
  - b. **Question (RJ Dowdy):** Isn’t the “X” design cheaper because it is a simpler design?
    - i. Blanche said we will not have costs on this bridge until we have design. Both the design images are very close in price. The County was tasked with providing an iconic bridge and architectural statement for the district.
  - c. **Comment (Megan Dowdy):** It is frustrating for people who have taken time away from their businesses to be presented with options that do not reflect what they previously discussed. Preference is for the Drone vs. the Wave Concept because the Wave is too futuristic for the aesthetic of International Drive. Likes the \$1M allowance for digital art display on the Drone concept. Does not agree with copying the design aesthetics of the Convention Center, because the district is more than the Convention Center.
  - d. **Comment/Question (RJ Dowdy):** The Wave looks less durable and cheaper, and questions how security would function on the bridge. Is there an estimate on the bridge cost?
    - i. Michael says the preliminary estimates are around \$30 million.
  - e. **Comment (Blanche Hardy):** Blanche recognizes Loreen Bobo from FDOT to recognize FDOT’s work in ensuring that the project is doable and can move forward.
  - f. **Question:** From the FDOT perspective, is the digital display on the Drone concept a concern for drivers?
    - i. It is something FDOT will need to look at.

- g. **Comment (Rob Herrick):** Preference for the Drone option; the Wave option seems like it will be more costly, and the design is not likely to be as appreciated from the exterior. Likes simplistic with the curved sides design, and the Drone lends itself well to lightning. Wish the Drone design roof structure could be altered and extended. Also questions the placement of the elevator and stairways as entry points.
  - i. Michael says this was a structural consideration, and Blanche says it allows the property owners the choose to extend the walkways to their properties.
- h. **Comment/Question (Fernando Ching):** Prefers the Drone but would like a commitment to 24/7 security and shares concern it could become a shelter for people. When could construction of the bridge begin?
  - i. Brian Sanders said approvals of this study could take through the end of the year. Then, the design phase could take 12-16 months. This project would only be feasible with donations of right-of-way. Construction would have to take place in phases, which could take another year. A lot of the bridge would have to be prefabricated, and construction would take at least a year. There have been several construction and transportation projects in the area in recent years. The County is working closely with the designers of the other projects.
- i. **Questions/Comments:** Is the \$1M for digital art additive of the project or included? Why isn't the person taking on the digital signage paying for that, and what kind of revenue is there to support it? Also prefers the Drone concept and believes there are opportunities to advertise inside the bridge. Wants to ensure International Drive is emphasized over Sand Lake Road in the design. What materials are being used? And why does the entire structure need to be covered?
  - i. Blanche says FDOT's allowances for advertising and signage are not determined yet for the exterior. Michael says the intention is a digital art display, not in terms of advertising. Michael says it is a lot of steel, concrete, metal roofing; on the some of the flat sections there would be TPO roofing and a plan to cover the entire structure to provide shade.
- j. **Comment:** Concern that covering the entire structure would encourage homeless to shelter in the area.
- k. **Question:** Can you share cost estimates at the next meeting or in the next phase, because the CRA currently does not have the funding for \$30 million? Greater concern is on safety, rather than iconic nature of the bridge.
  - i. Blanche says the County continues to pursue grants from the federal government for the bridge and has worked with FDOT to talk about potential grants for the project. Knows that the County has exceeded the \$20M from the CRA and is looking for alternative funding sources.
- l. **Question:** How would you score the safety versus the aesthetics?
  - i. Blanche says the barriers that you see are on the side of the road in the design concepts are not standard barrier; have worked with FDOT to develop a barrier system to eliminate crossing at the intersection. One of the first goals was to eliminate on-street crossing. Blanche says they are required to completely cage in the bridges and have worked with the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office to ensure structure of the bridges does not interfere with emergency response efforts.

- ii. Safety has been the priority and the team has spent the least amount of time on the aesthetics.
- m. **Question:** Can you update renderings to reflect the new divergent diamond travel ways from the nearby I4 design?
- n. **Question:** How is the Wave concept powered?
  - i. Michael says there would be photovoltaic panels on the Wave but not as prominently.
- o. **Question:** Is the photovoltaic worth doing, and is there a return on it?
  - i. Michael says the team will need to do the analysis but wanted to decide upon the preferred design direction. Blanche says there will not be costs available until the designers on board.
- p. **Comment/Question:** Safety is the No. 1 priority for us. Will there be cameras inside the bridge and who will monitor them?
  - i. Michael says no matter which of the two designs are selected, it will greatly improve safety. There will be cameras inside monitored by OCSO.
- q. **Comment:** Does not want the bridge to become a destination; wants it to be a way to move people safely across the intersection. Does not favor the digital art and wants to consider LED lighting that could utilize different colors for special events.
- r. **Comment/Question:** Drone design is the most aesthetically pleasing. Who is currently negotiating right-of-way with the property owners?
  - i. Blanche says the County has had initial meetings with the property owners and confirmed the footprints of the towers. In the very near future will meet again with the corner property owners. Will be going into community meetings and meetings with Clear Channel and the property owners within the next six weeks.
- s. **Question:** Are there other bridges like these with available data on their success?
  - i. Michael says the team initially pulled images of the most iconic bridges from around the world. The firm has done at least 9 pedestrian bridges and uses lessons learned. The team has not found another similar configuration of a pedestrian bridge anywhere else, which makes it unique and memorable. The team also considered prior projects at Disney and sees the benefit in putting all pedestrian traffic overhead and keeping vehicular traffic moving.
- t. **Comment/Question:** Prefers using LED lighting color options instead of a digital screen. The PAG seems to unanimously prefer the Drone concept over the Wave. Why can't the County purchase the property needed from the landowners?
  - i. That has been the County policy and approach that has been taken for the transit lanes so far. If we get to a stumbling spot, the team would go back to the County administration to discuss. The value per square foot is very high in the International Drive corridor. This is a project that would benefit the area and property owners. The County would be requesting easements but not restrict development by the property owners on that square footage.
- u. **Comment:** The design team appreciates the suggestions and is taking them into account and would look at refining the Drone concept based upon the comments provided today. The intention is to use the digital art to make it iconic; safety has always been fundamental in the design.

5. Final Comments and Next Steps

- a. Blanche says another public meeting will be scheduled. Then a work session before the Local Planning Agency and a work session before the Board of County Commissioners. Comments are not accepted during work sessions.
- b. Recommendations will be taken into consideration and a public hearing will be scheduled with the Local Planning Agency, which will then make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for permission to design and construct the bridge.