



July 10, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Letter of Support for Dunedin Causeway Bridge BUILD Grant**

Dear Madam Secretary:

As the Executive Director of Forward Pinellas, the metropolitan planning organization for Pinellas County, I am writing to urge you to fund the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant request from Pinellas County for the replacement of the Dunedin Causeway Bridge. This is a critical funding request to address one of our most challenging issues – replacing and adapting our aging infrastructure for sea level rise. The federal government’s support for replacing the Dunedin Causeway Bridge is a worthwhile investment for several reasons:

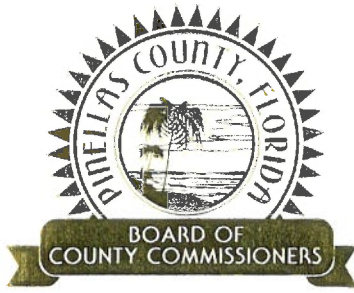
- The bridge connects the Pinellas County mainland and City of Dunedin to Honeymoon Island State Park, Florida’s most popular state park with more than one million annual visitors;
- With explosive growth occurring in the surrounding counties of the Tampa Bay region, there is increasing demand on the Dunedin Causeway to access the pristine waters of St. Joseph Sound and the Gulf of Mexico’s beaches, causing congestion that hampers the local economy;
- The new fixed span bridge will help alleviate congestion from bridge openings while providing wider paths for walking and bicycling, thus improving safety for all users by reducing conflicts.

The Dunedin Causeway Bridge replacement is in the Forward Pinellas 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and is a critical component of our countywide emphasis on improving beach community access. The bridge improvement will support economic development by enabling desired redevelopment along the Causeway, providing a better connection between the state park and the mainland.

I ask you to approve this request and help our community address its aging infrastructure and plan for sea level rise impacts. I am confident this is a worthwhile investment of federal dollars, supporting continued private investment in our community.

Sincerely,

Whit Blanton FAICP  
Executive Director



**KAREN WILLIAMS SEEL**  
CHAIR

# PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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July 10, 2019

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Pinellas County Government for consideration of the Dunedin Causeway Bridges project to be selected for funding through the Department of Transportation's BUILD Transportation grant. The project involves the construction of a tide relief bridge and mid-level movable bridge in place of the two existing bridges of which are the sole connection from the City of Dunedin to Honeymoon Island State Park and residential living.

Located on the Gulf Coast of Florida, Pinellas County is home to nearly one million residents, with an additional 15.5 million visitors each year, including seasonal residents and tourists. The County values the significance the City of Dunedin and Honeymoon Island State Park brings to the community, both economically and as a favorite destination for citizens and visitors to enjoy natural Florida.

Honeymoon Island State Park is enriched with serene beaches, bountiful wildlife and natural vegetation and is also the ferry terminal for access to another unspoiled state park, Caladesi Island. Honeymoon Island has a direct annual economic impact of \$150 million to the county. The causeway located along the existing bridges is a popular area for citizens and visitors to enjoy recreational activities such as walking, jogging and biking on the designated trail and swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, and fishing in the intercoastal waterways. The causeway is also home to several small business vendors that support these recreational activities or offer food and beverage options.

Pinellas County government confidently supports investing in the longevity of the Dunedin Causeway Bridges. The project directly aligns with the County's Strategic Plan goal to *Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality* by investing in infrastructure to meet current and future needs, and in doing so, providing safe and efficient transportation systems to support the efficient flow of motorists, commerce and regional connectivity.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Williams Seel".

KAREN WILLIAMS SEEL, Chair  
Pinellas County Commission

# DUNEDIN

Home of Honeymoon Island

CITY HALL  
P.O. BOX 1348  
DUNEDIN, FLORIDA 34697-1348  
(727) 298-3000

July 9, 2019

Office of Infrastructure Finance and Innovation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
[BUILDgrants@dot.gov](mailto:BUILDgrants@dot.gov)

To whom it may concern:

RE: City of Dunedin Statement of Support  
Pinellas County, Florida - BUILD Grant Application / Dunedin Causeway Bridges  
Pinellas County PD&E Study Project No: PID 00423A  
FDOT Work Program Item Segment No.: 437538-1 / ETDM No: 14221

Pinellas County is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the necessary replacement of the aging Dunedin Causeway Bridges. The study includes an evaluation of impacts to publicly owned recreational lands. A spur of the Pinellas Trail, a multi-use county wide recreation trail is located along Causeway Boulevard which includes both the Main and Tide Relief Bridges. This spur connects the mainline section of the Pinellas Trail (along Alternate US19) to Honeymoon Island State Park, located at the western terminus of the Dunedin Causeway. Honeymoon Island is the state's busiest park with 1.3 million visitors per year. In addition, County and City owned recreational areas, consisting primarily of sandy beaches, are present along the causeway on both the north and south sides of Causeway Boulevard. Opportunities for recreational activities along the causeway include swimming, sailing, power-boating, kayaking, sunbathing, sunset observation, picnicking, fishing, running, walking, roller-blading and bicycling. Fishing is also common from the seawalls at the bridge ends and the existing narrow sidewalk on the north side of the bridges.

The City of Dunedin has been an active stakeholder partner with Pinellas County throughout their PD&E Study. At the outset of the PD&E Study, the City Commission authorized the formation of a Dunedin Causeway Bridge Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. Our community has been actively engaged in the PD&E process and has a vested interest in the County's efforts to replace the existing bridge infrastructure to insure the safe and continued access of City, County, and regional visitors to existing recreational and residential activity centers located west of these bridges. The preferred Mid-Level Bascule Bridge alternative will substantially reduce the number of current bridge openings, thereby providing significant improvements to air quality by reducing congestion related emissions.

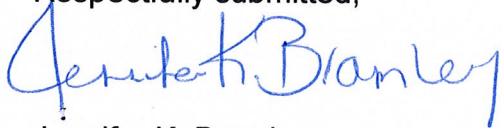
Along with this "Statement of Support" letter, we hereby attach Resolution 08-15, passed by the City of Dunedin Commissioners on June 5, 2008, in which the City designated the entire Dunedin Causeway, as a "Significant Pinellas County Greenway and an integral addition to the overall Pinellas County Greenway system". The designations outlined in Resolution 08-15, and included the following:

- The Dunedin Causeway functions as a linear waterfront recreation area, providing the public with recreational and visual access to the waters and natural coastal resources along the Gulf of Mexico.
- The Dunedin Causeway will enhance the local greenway system by providing a linear recreational corridor that links Honeymoon Island State Park to the Pinellas Trail system.

Within Pinellas County, greenways are used to protect environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife, and also provide for an alternative means of transportation which links people to outdoor recreational opportunities that foster local stewardship of natural and cultural resources. The City of Dunedin Commission recognizes the economic, social and environmental value of preserving the Dunedin Causeway, a unique recreational greenway. The aforementioned Bridge Ad Hoc Advisory Committee authored a statement regarding the Cultural and Recreational Aspects of the Dunedin Causeway, dated April 2015 (also attached).

Should you have questions regarding the City's support of the County's BUILD Grant Application for the Dunedin Causeway Bridges project, please contact Jorge M. Quintas, P.E., Director of Public Works & Utilities / City Engineer, at 727-298-3175, or by email at [JQuintas@DunedinFL.Net](mailto:JQuintas@DunedinFL.Net). We understand this information will become part of the County's BUILD Grant application package, and thank you in advance for your consideration of Pinellas County's request.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer K. Bramley  
City Manager

Enclosures

cc: City of Dunedin Commissioners  
Douglas Hutchens, Deputy City Manager  
Jorge M. Quintas, P.E., PW & Utilities Director / City Engineer  
Joan M. Rice, P.E., Multi-Modal Safety, Pinellas County Traffic