



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 22-0404A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Resolution determining the necessity to construct bridge and drainage improvements to Beckett Bridge and Riverside Drive and directing the condemnation of the necessary properties and property rights required for construction.

### **Recommended Action:**

Recommend the adoption of a resolution determining the necessity to construct bridge and drainage improvements to Beckett Bridge and Riverside Drive and directing the condemnation of the necessary properties and property rights required for construction.

- Beckett Bridge is functionally obsolete and structurally deficient. A need exists for improved stormwater drainage east and west of the bridge on Riverside Drive and Spring Boulevard.
- The Board of County Commissioners (Board) is empowered under Chapters 73, 74 and 127 of the Florida Statutes to exercise eminent domain and acquire such property and property rights as deemed necessary for the public purpose of construction and future maintenance of the project.
- Resolution of Necessity will maintain the County's eligibility for federal funding opportunities.
- Resolution authorizes the Board to acquire specified interests in numerous properties described in Exhibits A-T, attached to the resolution, to construct the project.
- Attached right of way needs Memorandum details previous efforts associated with the improvements of Beckett Bridge.
- All efforts will be pursued to obtain the properties through voluntary acquisition.

PID 001037A Beckett Bridge replacement and PID 001037B Riverside Drive and Spring Boulevard drainage improvements; Authorize the Clerk of the Circuit Court to record the resolution in the public records of Pinellas County.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare  
2.5 Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality  
4.4 Invest in infrastructure to meet current and future needs

### **Summary:**

The Resolution is for the purpose of determining necessity of right of way acquisition for the

construction of bridge and drainage improvements for the Beckett Bridge, Riverside Drive and Spring Boulevard project, directing the condemnation of the necessary properties and property rights required for construction. A Resolution of Necessity will maintain the County's eligibility for the federal funding opportunities.

The associated Right of Way Needs Memorandum, included with the Resolution, serves to inform the Board of County Commissioners (Board) of the project purpose and chronology; evidence and presentations the Board considered in determining the project scope, design and analysis of alternatives, safety concerns, environmental concerns, costs of the project and long-range planning.

This project includes replacement of the functionally obsolete and structurally deficient Beckett Bascule Bridge over Whitcomb Bayou in Tarpon Springs, with a new bascule bridge on the same alignment of the existing bridge. In addition, the project includes improvements to stormwater drainage to the east and west along Riverside Drive and Spring Boulevard. Riverside Drive and Spring Boulevard lead to Beckett Bridge from the west and east respectively and connect to fully developed residential and commercial areas in Tarpon Springs.

Functional obsolescence and structural deterioration of the Bridge have led to the need to limit the loading of the Bridge by vehicles, resulting in school buses and other large vehicles prevented from traversing the Bridge, disrupting traffic flow, and leading to increased transportation cost and additional traffic load in other areas. The replacement of the Bridge will result in safety improvements including a better load rating for traffic, improved bridge railing, guardrails, sidewalk, transition, and end treatments to meet current safety standards, as well as improvements for pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The County Attorney will be authorized and directed to acquire necessary parcels by negotiation, or failing voluntary sale by the owners, condemnation.

#### **Background Information:**

The Board approved the recommended alternative to replace the existing Bridge with a new movable bridge on October 22, 2013. The Forward Pinellas 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted on November 13, 2019, has identified replacement of the Bridge by 2045.

The Board has previously considered engineering analysis and workshop presentations on prior occasions, as reflected in the Right of Way Needs Memorandum, and has determined the necessity of acquiring certain properties and property rights only after considering alternative designs, safety factors, environmental considerations, costs of the project, and long-range area planning. The Board is empowered under Chapters 73, 74 and 127 of Florida Statutes to exercise eminent domain and acquire such property and property rights as deemed necessary for the public purpose of construction and future maintenance of this project.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

Funding to support this project is budgeted in the County's Capital Improvement Program. The source of County funding for the land acquisition is the Infrastructure Sales Tax (Penny for Pinellas). The total estimated funds required to acquire the listed properties is \$491,500.00.

#### **Staff Member Responsible:**

Kelli Hammer Levy, Director, Public Works

**Partners:**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Resolution (including Right of Way Needs Memorandum and Exhibits A-T)  
Right of Way Exhibit  
Easements Location Map  
Permits Status Memorandum  
Project Location Map