

RESOLUTION NO. 2018- 237

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING AN INITIAL INTEREST IN ACCEPTING A PORTION OF THE EXISTING SHANDS BRIDGE FOR USE AS A PUBLIC RECREATIONAL/FISHING PIER AND AN ACCESS POINT TO THE ST. JOHNS RIVER.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is planning to replace the existing Shands Bridge with the new First Coast Expressway Bridge (Project), and has offered to donate a portion of the Shands Bridge to St. Johns County (County) for use as a public recreational/fishing pier; and

WHEREAS, unless the County expresses an initial interest in accepting the donation, FDOT plans to demolish the existing Shands Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the proposed donation is generally described as approximately 864 feet of the existing Shands Bridge, which is situated on the east bank of the St. Johns River; and

WHEREAS, based upon its initial review, County staff has identified the need for such a public recreational pier in the area that would provide access to the St. Johns River; and

WHEREAS, subject to a condition assessment of the bridge that there are no imminent costly repairs or dangerous conditions associated with the proposed donation, accepting the donation would serve the interests of the County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, in the event that the County seeks to move forward with formal acceptance of the donation described herein, such acceptance shall be effectuated by entering into a transfer and maintenance agreement, which is subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, the purpose of this Resolution is to provide notice to FDOT of the County's initial interest in retaining a portion of the existing Shands Bridge for use as a public recreational/fishing pier, and in no way binds or obligates the County to formally accept the bridge or any portion thereof;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. The above Recitals are incorporated by reference into the body of this Resolution and such Recitals are adopted as findings of fact.

Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners hereby authorizes execution of this Resolution for the sole purpose of providing notice to the Florida Department of Transportation

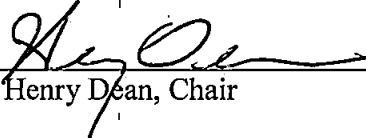
of the County's initial interest in accepting approximately 864 feet of the existing Shands Bridge, situated on the east bank of the St. Johns River for use as public recreational/fishing pier. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as formal acceptance of the proposed donation described herein.

Section 3. Formal acceptance of the donation described herein by the County shall be conditioned upon entering into a transfer and maintenance agreement, approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

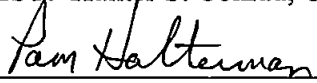
Section 4. To the extent that there are any typographical or scrivener's errors that do not change the tone, tenor, or concept of this Resolution, then this Resolution may be revised without subsequent approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this 7th day of August, 2018.

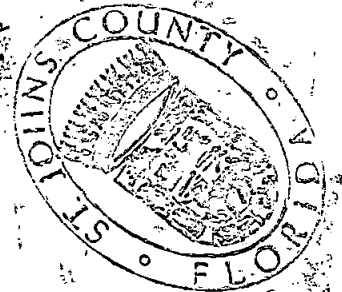
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Henry Dean, Chair

ATTEST: Hunter S. Conrad, Clerk

By: 
Deputy Clerk

RENDITION DATE 8/9/18





**Land Management Systems
Department
REAL ESTATE DIVISION REPORT
Shands Bridge Donation**

To: Darrell Locklear, PE, Assistant County Administrator

From: Gail Oliver, PLS, Land Management Systems Department Director

Date of report: March 22, 2018
May 10, 2018 Updated

Subject: **Shands Bridge Donation from FDOT**

**Commissioner
District:** District I

Background:

The Florida Department of Transportation reached out to the County on February 8, 2018 inquiring as the County's desire to take over ownership and maintenance of a portion of the existing Shands Bridge once the new First Coast Expressway Bridge is opened in approximately 2030.

If no interest, FDOT would demolish all the bridge in St. Johns County. If the county desires to retain a portion of the bridge as a pier, FDOT would add appropriate pedestrian railings, lighting and a parking lot to turn the bridge over to the County.

Due to the permitting and construction schedule FDOT has requested a decision in the next few weeks to begin preparing the permit and transfer and maintenance agreement.

Benefits:

Acceptance of the proposed donation would allow for the expansion of public access to the St. Johns River by way of an 864 ft. fishing pier for our local residents and visitors in a fast growing section of St. Johns County.

Additionally, should the County desire to make any physical improvements to the project site, funding for these types of projects could be eligible for funding from multiple grant programs.

The proposed pier may afford St. Johns County the opportunity to host large-scale recreational events to draw tourists--which would qualify the facility for TDC Category III funding for capital improvements as well as create a positive economic impact on the County's TDC Category III Sports Marketing initiative.

Should grants be received, the addition of a multilane boat ramp would also provide our residents and guests with a much needed public access point in a growing area of St. Johns County. The site contains adequate parking to allow for heavy use associated with our other ramps located along the St. Johns River in this area.

Per the Phase I Parks and Recreation Master Plan Needs Assessment Survey, public access, in the form of fishing piers and additional boat ramps, to the St. Johns River ranked high in this area of St. Johns County.

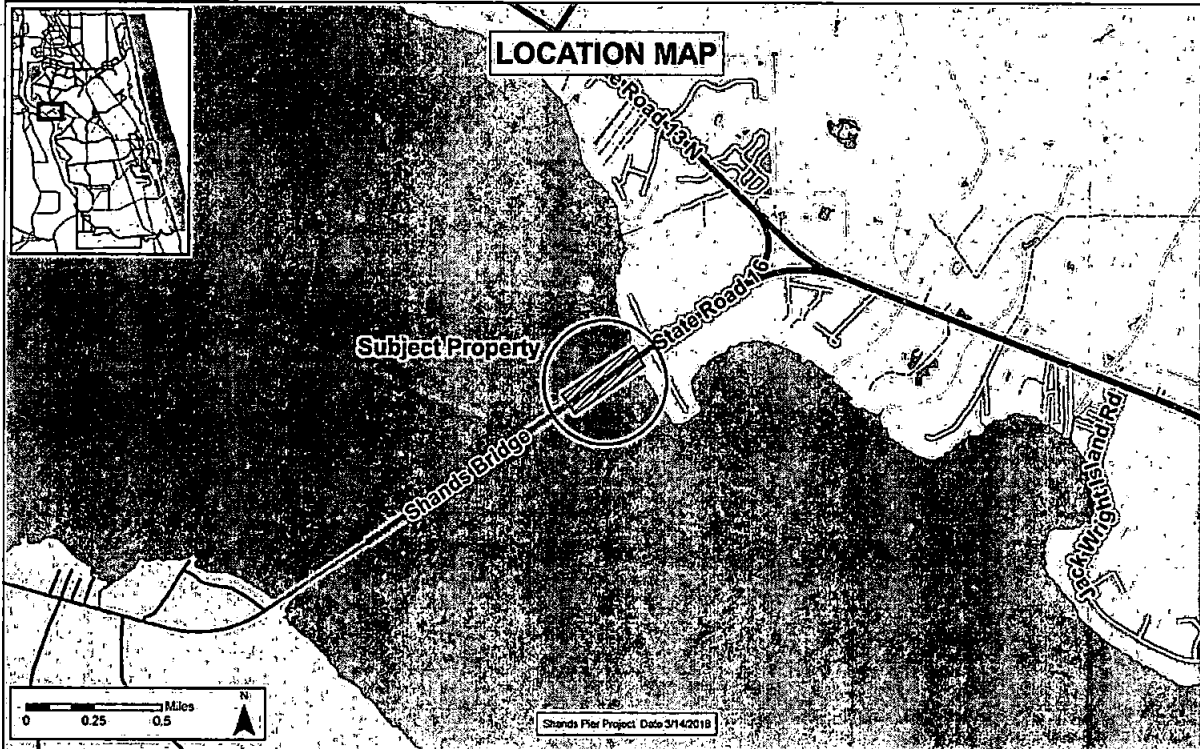
Maintenance Cost:

Parks and Recreation maintenance is estimated as \$11K annually and includes mowing and trash pick-up, and other general upkeep similar to all our parks.

Annual Facility Maintenance cost of \$30K and is based on a prorated amount of existing FDOT maintenance cost.

Staff did ask FDOT for assistance with future Maintenance Cost. FDOT responded they cannot pay for maintenance on the bridge because they cannot use construction money for maintenance. They also stated if they did tear down the old bridge they would get mitigation credit for the new bridge. Transferring a portion of the bridge to the County requires FDOT to mitigate elsewhere.

Estimated time of conveyance is in 2030.



AERIAL MAP

Alpine Groves Park



Old Shands Pier



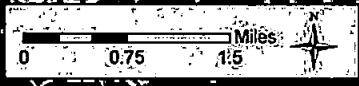
Project Area



Trout Creek Park

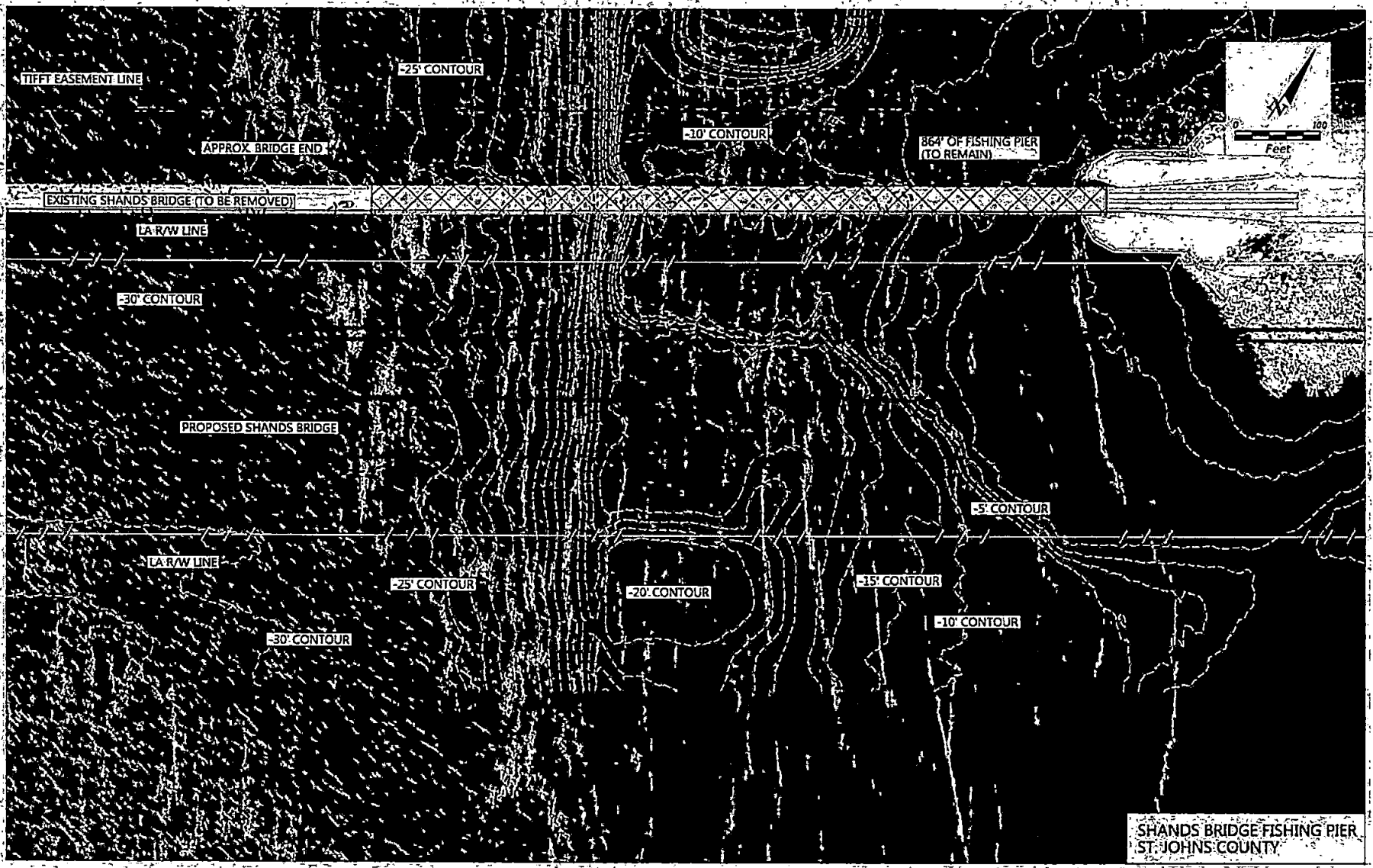


Palmo Fish Camp



Shands Pier Project Date 3/14/2018

Source: Esri, Mapbox, DeLorme, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



SHANDS BRIDGE FISHING PIER
ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Updated Information: May 11, 2018

County Commission Status Update Memo was sent to the Board of County Commissioners on March 26, 2018. The item was discussed under Commissioner Comments at the April 3, 2018 Board of County Commissioners Meeting. Below is a staff summary in response to the discussion:

Pros:

- Addresses a need of expanding public access to the St. Johns River in the Northwest area of the County.
- Provides for a parcel of St. Johns River "riverfront" land for parking and future boat ramp.
- Provides for a lighted fishing pier.
- Provides for a lighted parking lot.

Costs:

- FDOT to convert bridge to pedestrian pier with pedestrian railing.
- FDOT to pave a parking lot.
- FDOT to light the parking lot and pier.
- Two room restroom with well and septic tank is estimated at \$175K.
- Two lane boat ramp and floating dock estimated \$600K with 50/50 matching grant opportunities. Note: Total cost of improvements may differ once plans are developed based on 2030 needs.
- Annual maintenance \$11K for mowing and trash pick-up.
- Annual electric cost \$1K.

Unknowns:

- Condition of the bridge at time of estimated acceptance in 2030. Staff recommends a condition assessment of the bridge by a structural bridge consultant prior to executing the acceptance agreement with FDOT. Per FDOT, the acceptance agreement would be entered into prior to final design within the coming year (2018-2019). *(The estimate for the bridge condition assessment has a three phase approached as follows: Phase 1 - \$30K; Phase 2 - \$30K depending on Phase 1 findings and if detailed underwater inspections are merited; and Phase 3 - \$25K depending on Phase 2 and if material testing is merited.)*
- Annual maintenance cost of \$30K have been estimated using current FDOT records. However, maintenance for traffic use and maintenance for pedestrian use may vary. An element of the condition assessment mentioned above would include development of annual maintenance cost for remainder of the life of the bridge.
- Remaining life of the bridge as a pier. The bridge will be 69 – 70 years old at time of acceptance. An additional element of the condition assessment would also include development of end of life and disposal costs.

Board Action Steps:

1. The Board's current action is to express a statement of interest, as requested by the FDOT, in accepting the bridge. This is important for FDOT to continue their preliminary design phase of the project and work through their mitigation needs.
2. Within one to two years of the above action (2018-2019), FDOT would request the County to enter into an acceptance agreement. Prior to entering into the agreement, the above mentioned bridge condition assessment is recommended.
3. In approximately 2030, when the First Coast Expressway bridge is opened, the FDOT would request transfer of ownership of the remaining portion of the old bridge and the associated land and improvements.

Specific Board questions with Staff responses in green.

Commissioner Johns:

1. Cost/Plan for restrooms? A two room restroom is estimated at \$175K including potable well and raised bed septic system
2. Utilities cost to provide water and sewer/septic tanks? Currently, the area is not serviced by a utility provider and there are no known plans to connect in this area. The estimate for a potable well and raised bed septic system is \$43K and is included in the estimate in No. 1 above.
3. Lighting cost – Will FDOT install lights on bridge and in parking lot? Yes FDOT has agreed to install lighting on the bridge and in the parking lot. The County will be responsible for operation and maintenance cost once the improvements are transferred to the County. The estimated annual electric cost for pier and parking lot lighting, including the restrooms is \$1K.

Commissioner Waldron:

4. Plan for boat ramps? Yes boat ramps are planned.
5. Cost and how to fund? Improvements may be eligible for the following grants; Florida Inland Navigation District Waterways Assistance Program Grant, Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program Grant and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These grants are typically a 50/50 match program. If the improvements include a two lane boat ramp with a dock and floating dock, the cost are estimated at \$600K. This is an estimate only as there may be variables to hydrographic conditions and permitting that may have an impact on this estimate.

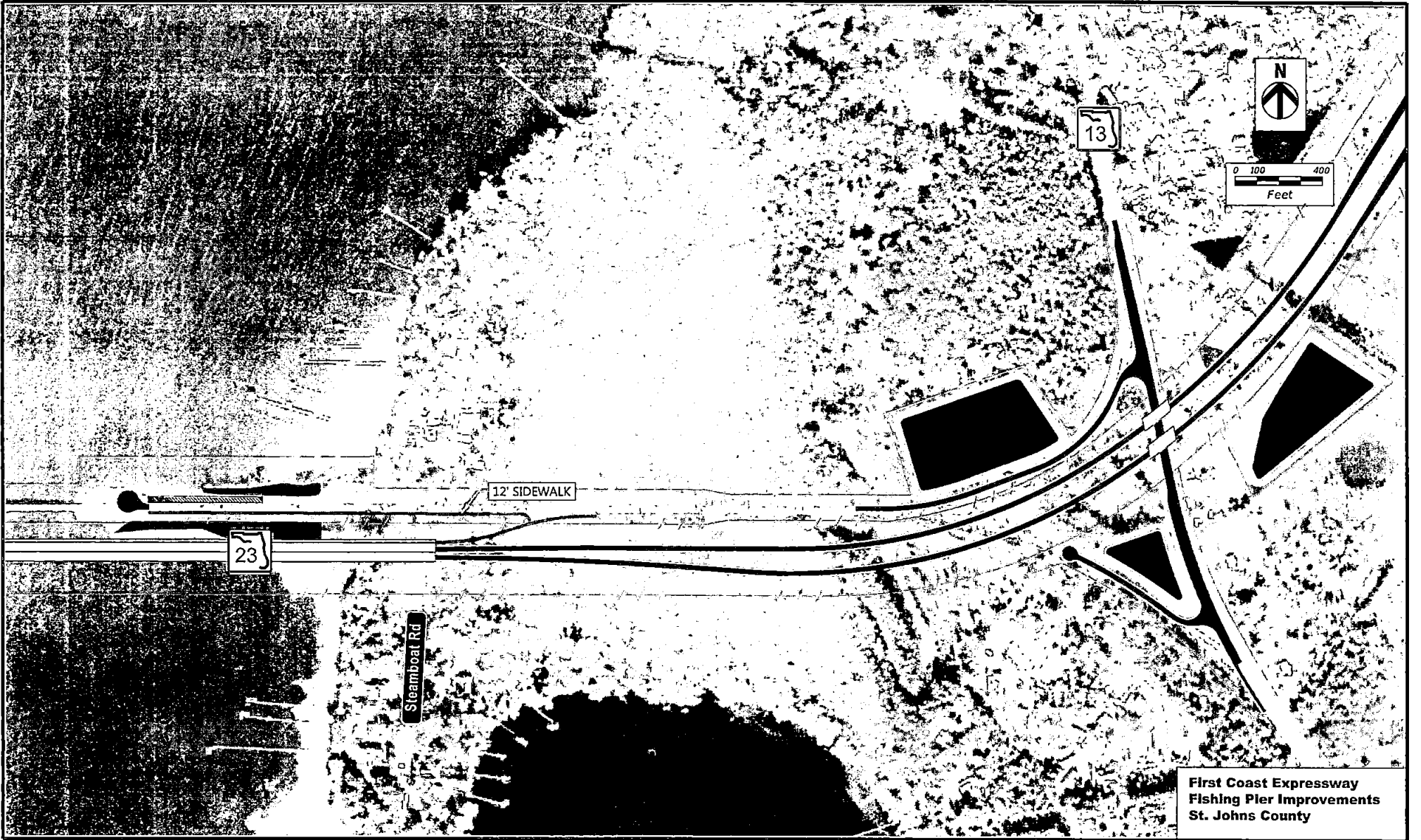
Commissioner Smith:

6. Clay County status? Per Clay County Administration, their Board of County Commissioners is very interested in accepting the portion of the bridge on the Clay County side.
7. Vilano Bridge Cost of Maintenance: Since 2000, the County has spent \$1.6M on maintenance and repair.

8. Longevity of the investment we just made into the Vilano Bridge that is supposed to last 12 to 15 years? The recent repairs to the steel beams are estimated to last 15 years.
9. Are there differences between Vilano and Shands? The Vilano bridge was constructed in 1948 (70-years old), Shands in 1961 (57 years now, 69 years at expected conveyance). The major structural difference between the two is Vilano has steel beams and Shands has steel reinforced concrete beams. The environmental conditions differ between Vilano and Shands in that Vilano is subject to high velocity water conditions and high salinity exposure. The Shands Bridge is low velocity water conditions and low salinity exposure.
10. What are cost of useful improvements? This depends on the improvement (see restroom and boat ramps estimates above in No. 1 and No. 5).
11. What is the cost savings for FDOT by the County accepting the bridge? i.e. How much savings to state taxpayers by FDOT not having to tear the bridge down? Per FDOT, minimal if any savings as FDOT will offset the demolition savings with the cost to convert bridge to pedestrian use and construct a parking lot, including lighting on both.

Commissioner Morris:

12. What condition will the bridge be in when we accept it? Condition of bridge at the time of estimated acceptance in 2030 is unknown. Staff recommends an evaluation of the bridge condition for long term use as a pedestrian pier prior to executing the acceptance agreement with FDOT.
13. Will the bridge be refurbished before it is turned over? Per FDOT, the bridge will be retrofitted for pedestrian use. There are no structural refurbishments planned.
14. Will FDOT save millions by not tearing it down? See answer to 11 above.



First Coast Expressway
Fishing Pier Improvements
St. Johns County