

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Town Commission

FROM: Howard Tipton, Town Manager

REPORT DATE: March 18, 2026

MEETING DATE: March 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Longboat Pass Bridge Replacement

Background

At its June 17, 2024, Regular Workshop, the Town Commission received a presentation from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding the proposed construction of the Longboat Pass Bridge. Following this presentation, the Commission submitted correspondence to FDOT outlining the Town's preferred option for the bridge replacement.

FDOT has since conducted both in-person and virtual public hearings (March 12th and 17th, 2026) to share the preferred alternative, along with the analyses completed to date as part of the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. This study assesses and documents the anticipated benefits, costs, and potential impacts associated with replacing the existing S.R. 789 Bridge over Longboat Pass, including consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

The FDOT preferred alternative identified in the study offered several potential advantages, including the preservation of multi-modal connectivity through enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improved emergency evacuation and response times, and the ability to maintain continuous vehicular and marine traffic during operations. Additionally, the project is expected to reduce long-term operating and maintenance costs while enhancing overall safety for all users of the bridge. In summary, the PD&E Study reflected a comprehensive evaluation of the bridge replacement project, attempting to balance infrastructure needs with community priorities and environmental considerations.

However, numerous public comments and objections were submitted in opposition to the proposed high fixed-span bridge. Concerns focused on the bridge's height and steep approach, with many stating it could pose safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Additional feedback indicated that the design would not alleviate traffic congestion heading north into Bradenton Beach and would be inconsistent with the character of Longboat Key.

Staff has prepared a draft letter to the FDOT project team for the Commission's discussion and consideration.

Staff Recommendation

Provide direction to the Town Manager.

Attachments (Available in the Town Clerk's Office)

- A. Previous Commission correspondence to the Florida Department of Transportation
- B. Draft Correspondence for Approval
- C. PowerPoint Presentation

End of Agenda Item