



# CITY of PORT ST. LUCIE

I-95 Crossing Study, West Virginia Corridor Study,  
Third East West River Crossing PD&E Study  
**ENGINEERING STUDY PROJECTS**

The **community's connection** to our ongoing studies...  
from introduction, through alternatives, to final recommendations

EDITION 3  
OCTOBER 2003

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## Corridor Update



The City has taken the next step toward the construction of the bridge over Florida's Turnpike linking east and west Port St. Lucie along the West Virginia Corridor. The preparation of the construction plans for the Turnpike overpass will soon begin with an anticipated construction commencement date of late next year. The construction of this bridge will provide a needed third alternative to vehicles traveling from east to west Port St. Lucie.

The preliminary design efforts continue to progress with conceptual layouts for stormwater detention facilities and the development of a traffic circulation plan.

The traffic circulation plan will provide the location of access points to the West Virginia Drive Corridor. This plan will address the best way to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of traffic through the corridor as well as provide the local residential communities with assurances that the existing local roadways do not change in character, allowing their neighborhood roadways to continue to serve only the local residents. Look for the results of the work effort soon.

## Traffic Analysis Process

The City of Port St. Lucie, in conjunction with its transportation consultant, Keith and Schnars, P.A., has the task of preparing the traffic analysis component for each of the three studies related to the development of the Third East-West Transportation Corridor. These studies include the I-95

Crossing Study, the West Virginia Corridor Study from I-95 to Floresta Drive, and the Third East-West River Crossing Project Development & Environmental Study (PD&E) from Floresta Drive to U.S. 1. Although other evaluation criteria such as environmental impacts may be performed separately for each of the components of the Third East-West Transportation Corridor and the traffic findings presented accordingly, the actual traffic analysis for each section cannot be performed independent from the others. Thus, it is a citywide analysis extending to St. Lucie West Boulevard/Prima Vista Boulevard to the north, Gatlin Boulevard/Port St. Lucie Boulevard to the south, U.S. 1 to the east and Glades Cut-off Road and Range Line Road to the west.



## Project Hotline:

*To better serve you,  
the project hotline  
has been changed to  
a "toll-free" number,*

**1-866-StLucie  
1-866-785-8243**

**Willing Sellers List:**

*Is your home located  
along West Virginia  
Drive or Juliet Avenue?  
Call to be placed on the  
Willing Sellers List at:*

**Property Acquisition  
Information:**

772-344-4386

**Project Hotline:**

1-866-StLucie  
1-866-785-8243

## Traffic Analysis Process *(continued)*

The traffic analysis process starts with data collection which includes, among others, traffic volume counts at major and minor key roadways and intersections, existing roadway system characteristics, crash reports, and historic traffic growth trends. This information, combined with actual field observations, will form the basis for the existing traffic roadway capacity and operational analysis system. This system will help analysts identify current mobility patterns and congestion areas and the base platform from which future traffic projections and mobility pattern changes can be performed and reasonably checked.

In order to project traffic volumes for the future horizon analysis year, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Model (TCRPM), developed and maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organization

(MPO), will be refined for year 2003 based on parameters such as current socioeconomic data and demographics. Combined with projected growth trends and development potentials in the study area, this refined year 2003 regional model will serve as the basis to prepare a future regional model, and thus project traffic conditions for the projected opening year 2010, interim year 2020 and design year 2030, and roadway system network alternative analysis.

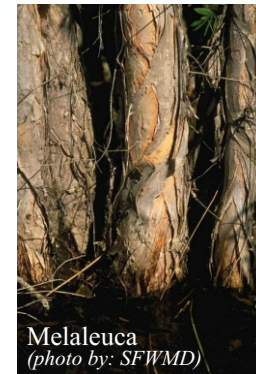
Once traffic conditions have been established for the future years and alternatives, system-wide capacity and operational analyses will be performed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Third East-West Transportation Corridor components in improving traffic mobility and congestion levels within the City of Port St. Lucie.

## Environmental Inventory Underway

The consultant team is currently doing field work to determine the presence of wetland and upland habitats in the areas of the possible bridge crossings. Like our ancestors, we are using the river as our road, to gain access to the otherwise inaccessible (and mostly impenetrable) habitats. Along the way we chatted with a number of homeowners and boaters who were curious about the equipment we were using to map our way. We have discovered that depending on very slight changes in water elevation, the habitats change from mangroves to a pond apple hammock and then to an upland live oak fringe in a matter of a few linear feet. We have also discovered that in certain locations the habitats have a high density of Brazilian Pepper and Melaleuca, invasive exotics that



Brazilian Pepper



Melaleuca  
*(photo by: SFWMD)*

are well-known problem plants in Central Florida. (as shown here) The information gathered in this stage is being mapped and will be used to evaluate the various alignments under consideration.

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## Environmental Inventory Underway *(continued)*

A significant milestone was reached with the visit of James Matthews, District Transportation Engineer of the Federal Highways Administration and Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, Senior Project Manager from the Florida Department of Transportation. They examined the project area by helicopter and got a “bird's eye view” of the project area to get a thorough understanding of the existing conditions and the wetland and upland conditions at the potential alignment locations. All of the crossing locations will have considerable impacts to the preserve area; it is the objective of the Federal

Highway Administration to minimize the amount of these impacts in the most effective way, while maintaining a cost-effective solution.

The consultant team will be working closely with the Department of Environmental Protection, and other interested agencies, to identify the most environmentally optimal crossing location to ensure the protection of the natural habitats and species in this Community treasure.

## Advisory Groups

**CDG** *Citizen Discussion Groups Form for Roadway Corridor Studies*

The success of the West Virginia Corridor Study and the Third East-West River Crossing Study will depend upon the continued exchange of information between the study team and the public. During the public kick-off meetings for both of these projects, a number of attending citizens took advantage of the opportunity to volunteer to become a part of a Citizens Discussion Group (CDG). After approval by the City, CDG members will meet to assist the study team with project development. The purpose of the CDGs is to help identify and discuss issues that pertain to the projects and to provide recommendations on the development of alternatives. These groups will be important consensus-building components for the studies and will help strengthen the partnership between the City of Port St. Lucie, the Florida Department of Transportation, environmental groups and the public.

A total of 33 citizens expressed interest in the West Virginia Corridor CDG while 14 individuals expressed interest in the Third East-West River Crossing group. CDG members will be notified in advance of each meeting to inform them of meeting dates, agendas, and materials to be reviewed. The study team is in the process of gathering field information for analysis and will develop an agenda for the initial CDG meeting based on their findings. No preconceived solutions exist for the proposed improvements. It is anticipated that the first CDG meeting will be scheduled for November 2003.

**TAC/EAC** *Technical and Environmental Committees to provide Guidance for the River Crossing Study*

Due both to the complex nature of the study and to State and Federal Regulations, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been formed for the Third East-West River Crossing Study. This committee will meet regularly to review and consider technical data, provide technical parameters and help guide the study team by providing input regarding the development of alternatives. The 19 members of the TAC represent various government organizations including the City of Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie County, the Florida Department of Transportation, the St. Lucie Fire Department, the St. Lucie County School District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In order to develop a plan that considers the sensitive environmental surroundings of the St. Lucie River, an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) has been created. The EAC will provide guidance and support in the development of alternative alignments. This committee will meet regularly to review and consider issues related to environmental data under consideration and will be invited to work with and guide the study team by providing input regarding alternatives. EAC representation includes regulatory agencies and environmental groups such as the Loxahatchee Chapter of the Florida Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the St. Lucie River Initiative.



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[www.cityofpsl.com](http://www.cityofpsl.com)

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Studies are underway.

**The process begins!**

## Public Involvement Central to Successful Studies

Both the City of Port St. Lucie and the Florida Department of Transportation recognize the importance of engaging the public in important transportation decisions. The success of the Third East West Corridor Studies depends on community input. To that end, the consultant team made up of Keith and Schnars, P.A. and Culpepper Terpening, Inc. has developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The plan outlines a schedule for various meetings, strategies and techniques to be used to solicit public input. It will encourage continuous public participation throughout the process.

Successful kick-off meetings were held on May 7th, and June 5th, 2003 that gave the public an overview of the projects and allowed for one-on-one interaction between concerned citizens and the Study Team.

Approximately 450 people attended these meetings to learn more about the studies and ask questions. Ongoing public involvement efforts include:

- Periodic newsletters
- 24-Hour Project Hotline (866) 785-8243
- Project Web Site [www.cityofpsl.com](http://www.cityofpsl.com)  
(look for Third East West Corridor Studies)
- Citizens Discussion Groups
- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee

As the studies proceed, the public will be encouraged to participate in Public Workshops and, for the Third East West River Crossing, a Public Hearing. Throughout the process, the public is invited to comment and ask questions either by calling our project hotline at (866) 785-8243 or logging on to our Web page on the City of Port St. Lucie's Web site ([www.cityofpsl.com](http://www.cityofpsl.com) - look for Third East West Corridor Studies). Public participation is vital to the success of these projects -- please plan to get involved!

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