State Road 7 Extension Project

PBTPA Advisory Committee Meetings
February 5 and 6, 2020
Grassy Waters Preserve

Critical Part of City Water System and Environmental Treasure

- Pristine remnant of the Everglades with high-quality water
- Water supply source for over 110,000 citizens of West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, South Palm Beach & unincorporated County
- Regional connection between Lake Okeechobee, Loxahatchee Slough, regional canals & Lake Worth Lagoon
Proposed Location – SR 7 Project

• Southern Segment - Widening SR 7 to 4 lanes between Okeechobee Blvd. and 60th Street.

• Northern Segment - 4-lane extension of SR 7 between 60th Street and Northlake Blvd.
SR 7 Project Timeline

- **2015** - FDOT sought Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) from South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to construct/operate SR 7 Project
- **2016-17** - SFWMD proposed to issue ERP, City challenged ERP, ALJ recommended issuance, Final Order approved ERP & City appealed to 4th DCA
- **2018-19** – 4th DCA overturned SFWMD Final Order and ordered a new hearing, case was transferred to DOAH & hearing scheduled for August 2019
- **June 2019** – FDOT modified SR 7 Project & FDOT learned through discovery project was not permittable
- **July 2019** – FDOT withdraws SR 7 ERP application to avoid a loss at the new hearing
- **July 2019-January 2020** – FDOT is modifying road design to come up with permittable project
- **December 2019** – Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (PBTPA) votes to remove SR 7 Project from the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- **February 20, 2020** – PBTPA Governing Board scheduled to consider amendment to add back the SR 7 Project
Impacts of SR 7 Project

- Adverse Water Quality Impacts to Grassy Waters Preserve
- Roadway Spill Risk
- Floodplain Encroachment
- Flooding in Ibis Development From Road
- Faulty Bridge Design
- Wetland Impacts
- Threatened and Endangered Species Impacts
- Impacts Cannot Be Mitigated
Nutrient Impacts of SR 7

SR 7 Stormwater runoff discharges to Ibis and then Grassy Water Preserve.
Nutrient Impacts of SR 7

- Phosphorus levels increase by 88% and nitrogen levels increase by 42% in stormwater discharge to GWP.
- Water quality modeling and observations confirm violation of narrative nutrient water quality standard in GWP.
Hazardous Spill Threat

- A 500-gallon spill of a hazardous chemical, such as dry-cleaning fluid (PCE) (600 times greater than the concentration triggering a cleanup response) into the M-Canal would reach Control 4 in 16 hours.

- Hazardous chemicals passing Control 4 would potentially shutdown of the City’s water treatment facility.

- Notification by emergency responders to the City can take more than 16 hours.

- Potential contamination throughout the regional system.
As of 2017: Grassy Waters is now classified as a High Risk Flood Zone by FEMA.

Gassy Waters is now an Unspecified A Zone.

The M-Canal South of Grassy Waters is now an AE Zone with a flood elevation of 19.1 Feet NAVD88.

The SR-7 Extension and Bridges encroach on both floodplains.
SR 7 Causes Ibis Development Flooding

- High flow rates from SR 7 into Ibis will cause home and road flooding under 25-year and 100-year storm events
- SR 7 discharges will prevent emergency response access to Ibis under extreme storm events
- Extremely high flow rates will damage treatment ponds and canals within Ibis
- Extremely high flow rates will exceed Ibis pump capacities
SR 7 Faulty Bridge Design

• Design of bridge over Ibis spillway causes backwater effect
• Water backing up into Ibis preserve
• Risk of flooding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Peak Elevation - No Bridge</th>
<th>With Bridge</th>
<th>Estimated Rise (inches)</th>
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<td>100-Year, 17.7 feet NAVD Boundary Condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downstream</td>
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SR 7 Wetland Impacts

- Direct impacts will destroy 58 acres of wetland and secondary impacts will harm 119 acres of wetlands in and around Grassy Waters Preserve.

- Other than the Grassy Waters Ecosystem, which includes the Ibis Preserve, no other oligotrophic wetlands comparable to the historic Everglades exist within the Eastern Palm Beach County Basin.
Inadequate Wetland Impact Mitigation

- SR 7 Right-of-Way was originally split between FDOT and Palm Beach County
- This allowed use of County Pine Glades Mitigation Area to mitigate impacts associated with its part of the right-of-way
- FDOT proposed to use Dupuis Reserve as mitigation for its part of the right-of-way
- In April 2018 County transferred its right-of-way to FDOT
- County no longer has any real estate interest in roadway
Inadequate Wetland Impact Mitigation

As a result of 2018 right-of-way transfer, SR 7 is no longer a County Project.

Pine Glades can only be used to mitigate impacts from County projects.

Pine Glades is no longer a viable mitigation area for SR 7.

42.70 wetland units, totaling over 159 acres of direct and secondary wetland impacts are now unmitigated.

No new mitigation has been identified.
Impact to Endangered Snail Kite

The Everglades Snail Kite is listed by both the State of Florida and the federal government as an endangered species. Snail kites continue to thrive in the Grassy Waters Ecosystem due to the protection and management of the preserve by the City of West Palm Beach.

The SR7 project, as proposed, will adversely impact water quality, wetlands and snail kites.

All photos taken within Grassy Waters Preserve
unknown costs of SR 7 project

FDOT’s estimated construction costs of $50M to extend SR 7 from 60th St. to Northlake Blvd. do not take required changes to the SR 7 into account

Costs not taken into account:

- Redesign and elevation of bridges and road
- Redesign to address floodplain and compensation
- Redirecting and managing stormwater in another location
- Cost of new wetland impact mitigation
Unknown New Stormwater Destination

If Ibis Development is Not Available, Where Will the Stormwater Go?
What Will the True Cost of SR 7 Be?

FDOT has not updated its cost estimates to account for necessary changes to SR 7 – FDOT Still estimates **$50 Million** for 60th St. to Northlake Blvd.

Updated estimates accounting for needed changes show estimated costs of **$117 Million** or more.
No Need for SR 7 Project

- Need determination for SR 7 was based on traffic analyses performed in 2006
- Since then, new development has moved to the west, and new road projects have followed
- Other County road extension and expansion projects address new traffic
- Over 80 new County road projects were approved as part of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Increased traffic capacity from other new roads makes SR 7 project unnecessary
SR 7 Should Not Be Added to the LRTP

- SR 7 Project will impact environment and public health and safety
  - Nutrient Impacts to Grassy Waters Preserve
  - Roadway Spill Risk
  - Floodplain Encroachment
  - Flooding in Ibis Development
  - Faulty Bridge Design
  - Harm to wetlands
  - Harm to endangered snail kite
  - Lack of mitigation

- No need for SR 7 given changes in development and numerous new proposed roads

- No information on how SR 7 issues could be addressed or how much it might cost to address them

- Updated analysis of traffic need and SR 7 costs must be conducted and evaluated
Where is the Technical Analysis?

Purpose of the PBTPA committees is to “provide technical review, comments, and recommendations” to the Governing Board

• No technical information provided regarding how environmental and design concerns about SR 7 will be addressed
• No technical information provided regarding what changes may being made to SR 7
• No technical information provided regarding potential cost of changes to SR 7
• No technical information regarding need for SR 7 based on up to date information and newly approved roads

PBTPA Committees should wait until there is enough information to perform a true review and make an informed recommendation