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David Fierro, (904) 360-5582
david.fierro@dot.state.fl.us

Transport of long beams will disrupt Heckscher traffic

Jacksonville – Over a three-week period starting April 13, transport trucks carrying bridge beams will make the trek from Gretna, north of Tallahassee, to Heckscher Drive, where a new high-rise bridge is being constructed over Sisters Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River.

The transports, measuring 16-18 feet in width, will bring 18 beams measuring 145-feet and 27 beams measuring 200-feet to be erected. The heaviest of the beams weigh as much as 120 tons.

Taking up two travel lanes on the interstate, the transport operation will bring the longer beams via I-10, I-295 and I-95 to Heckscher Drive, arriving at the bridge from the west. The shorter beams will travel I-10, I-295, I-95, A1A and Amelia Island Parkway to Heckscher Drive, accessing the bridge from the east. The transports will be accompanied by law enforcement escorts and the process may cause delays.

Weight restrictions on the various roadways dictate the direction of access. Some of the beams will be off-loaded from the existing bridge for erection.

Heckscher Drive will face 30-minute traffic delays during overnight hours (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.) as the beams are placed.

“We will be off-loading beams from the existing bridge on six nights during a three-week period,” said Brian Benton, FDOT project manager. “We regret any inconvenience but need to get these beams set to keep the project on schedule,” he added.

The Sisters Creek Bridge replaces a bascule bridge built in 1952. The new bridge is a high-rise bridge with a 65-foot vertical clearance that will eliminate traffic delays due to bridge openings for boats. Additionally, the high-rise bridge will eliminate a highway/marine conflict during hurricane evacuations.

Adjacent properties include the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve and the Nassau River St. Johns Aquatic Preserve, Sisters Creek Marina and BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards.

The new \$44.4 million Sisters Creek Bridge is being built by Archer Western Contractors. HNTB Engineers is handling the construction engineering and inspection. The bridge is scheduled for completion this summer.



NEW BRIDGE RISING -- An artists' rendering of the new Sisters Creek Bridge on Heckscher Drive. (Image courtesy of FDOT)