PUBLIC NOTICE (10-22)

All interested parties are herein notified that Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District has received an application dated June 13, 2022 from Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Bridge Design and Maintenance Office. The applicant is requesting approval of location and plans for a bridge replacement across a navigable waterway of the United States.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: Savannah River, Mile 21.5, Port Wentworth, Chatham County, Georgia, 32° 09’55.4” N, 81°09’17.7” W

CHARACTER OF WORK: Georgia Department of Transportation intends to replace the State Route (SR) 25/James P. Houlihan Memorial Bridge (Mile 21.5) over the Savannah River with a new, fixed span bridge. The project would replace the existing 33.6-foot wide by 1,465-foot long swing span bridge with a new 43-foot wide by 2,650-foot long fixed bridge with two, 12-foot wide travel lanes and 8-foot wide outside shoulders. The alignment of the new bridge would be offset approximately 77 feet north (centerline to centerline) of and parallel to the existing alignment.

A temporary work platform/trestle will be constructed to facilitate construction of the new bridge and demolition of the existing bridge. The work platform/trestle will be located in between the existing and replacement bridges and advanced simultaneously from both bridge approaches. The temporary work platform/trestle will not extend across the entire width of the Savannah River so the navigational channel will not be obstructed.

The existing bridge will be removed in its entirety. Demolition of the existing bridge would begin once the replacement bridge has been completed and is open to traffic.

MINIMUM NAVIGATIONAL CLEARANCES:
The proposed new bridge will have clearances as described in the table below relative to Mean Low Water (MLW).

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Existing (Feet)</th>
<th>Proposed (Feet)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>Unrestricted when open</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
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Datum: NAVD88

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:
The lead Federal agency for this project is Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). They have determined the bridge replacement warrants a Categorical Exclusion for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
In a letter dated April 6, 2020, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division (HPD) concurred with GDOT’s determination that the proposed project would have no adverse effect on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible Colerain Plantation District and Atlantic Coastal Highway Through Georgia Marker. The HPD concurred with GDOT’s determination that the proposed project would have an adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible James P. Houlihan Memorial Bridge and Atlantic Coastal Highway. Furthermore, HPD concurred that adequate measures have been proposed to minimize or avoid adverse effects.

A water quality certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, as amended, for this project is covered under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regional Permit 34. Application (SAS-2018-00046) submitted on May 26, 2022.

The proposed project is in the base floodplain. The 100-year flood elevation is 5.77 feet, while elevation of the low member of the navigation span is approximately 59 feet. Elevations are referenced to NAVD88 datum.

The Savannah River at the project site is identified as Open Water. Six tidally influenced wetlands were identified within the environmental survey boundary. Georgia Department of Transportation will mitigate unavoidable impacts to wetlands through the purchase of compensatory wetland credits from the Vallambrosa Mitigation Bank.

The Savannah River is considered Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for spiny lobster and snapper/grouper. The adjacent tidal and freshwater wetlands are also identified as EFH. Construction of the proposed project would result in fill, clearing, and shading impacts to EFH. In an email dated January 15, 2021, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concurred with FHWA’s determination that construction of the proposed project “may affect, likely to adversely affect” EFH. Since that determination was made, the project design has been modified and impacts to EFH have been significantly reduced. As a result, FHWA re-initiated consultation with NMFS on May 19, 2022.

In a letter dated August 26, 2020, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with FHWA’s determination that construction of the proposed project would “not likely adversely affect” the wood stork or West Indian manatee. In a letter dated May 24, 2022, USFWS concurred with FHWA’s determination that construction of the proposed project would “not likely adversely affect” the Eastern Black Rail.

**NAVIGATION:** During construction, temporary work trestles, construction barges, and other construction-related vessels may affect navigation. The Coast Guard will publish in the Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) project phases that may affect navigation. To subscribe to the Coast Guard LNM, please visit [http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/) under “Subscribe / Report (free)” select the notifications you wish to receive; note this project is located in the Seventh Coast Guard District area.

**SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS:**

Mariners are asked to comment on the proposed navigation clearances, placement of a bridge protective system and other navigational safety issues, including need for clearance gauges and extent of nighttime navigation to determine the need for bridge lighting.
Interested parties are asked to express their views, in writing, on the proposed bridge project including its possible environmental impacts to include those impacts on minority and/or low income populations, if any, giving sufficient detail to establish a clear understanding of the reasons for support of, or opposition to, the proposed work.

Comments will be received for the record at the office of: Commander (dpb), Seventh Coast Guard District, 909 SE 1st Ave., Ste. 432, Miami, Florida 33131-3028 or via email at: Omar.Beceiro@uscg.mil, for a 30-day period from the date of this public notice. The Coast Guard project manager for this application is Mr. Omar Beceiro, who can be contacted by mail at the above address or e-mail. Comments received will be made part of the project administrative record. (Plans attached)
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN BUILD PLANS UTILIZED TO OBTAIN COAST GUARD PERMIT. THE COST GUARD WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ANY CHANGES THAT MAY IMPACT THE NAVIGATIONAL WATERWAY.
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