

December 23, 2016

**Crosstown Parkway Extension Project
Receives Decisive Permit Authorizations from South Florida Water Management District**

Today, December 23, 2016, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) entered its Final Order resulting in the issuance of an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) and a sovereignty submerged lands (SSL) easement for the City's Crosstown Parkway Extension Project (the "Project"). With issuance of the permit and easement, the City now has the green light for construction to begin on this very important Project. The Crosstown Parkway Extension will provide Port St. Lucie's crucial third east-west crossing of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River, connecting the existing Crosstown Parkway from Manth Lane, east to U.S. Highway 1 at Village Green Drive. It will alleviate traffic congestion, improve public safety, help reduce travel times, enhance mobility and provide a new evacuation route.

"What the Crosstown Parkway Extension Project means to Port St. Lucie is far more than can be communicated by a quote," said Mayor Gregory Oravec. "The citizens and staff have been working on the third crossing over the River for decades. In a special election nearly 12 years ago, 89 percent of the voters approved an increase in our taxes to pay for it. The Bridge is critically needed for transportation, economic development, emergency response and evacuation. Yet, it means even more than the sum of these important parts. Since we received this critical permit, Etta James' "At Last" has played more than once in my mind, and, in 2017, we will all see the long-awaited construction of the Crosstown Bridge begin...at last."

The Final Order is the result of a case concerning a challenge to the SFWMD's intent to issue the ERP and SSL easement for the Project. Both the ERP and the SSL easement are necessary for the City to move forward with the construction of the Project. The challenge, which was filed by the Petitioners, resulted in a Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) evidentiary proceeding that occurred July 12, 2016 through July 13, 2016.

Although this permit challenge served to halt the City's ability to perform construction activities for the Project, the City successfully defended against the Petitioners' challenge and obtained a Recommended Order in its favor. Now, the City is able to move forward with its construction activities and its efforts to secure other permit approvals and authorizations required for the Project.

"This is an extremely exciting time for the City. After so many years in the process, we finally embark upon the final leg of the journey" said Patricia Roebing, Assistant City Manager and City Engineer.

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The Project is approximately two miles of a 6-lane divided roadway, with the bridge being approximately 4,000 feet, and will serve as a multi-modal transportation alternative that includes accommodations for automobile, bicycle, pedestrian and public transit. Construction for the Project is estimated to begin in early 2017. The estimated construction costs for the Project are \$86.9 million.

With this permit, the residents of Port St. Lucie will begin to see the much anticipated activity associated with construction of the Project. Initial activities will include utility relocation, clearing, installation of drainage, water and sewer mains, as well as casting of bridge structural components. Additional information will be posted on the Project-dedicated website, www.crosstownextension.com, as it becomes available regarding the Project schedule, public outreach efforts and special events.

For more information, please contact Beth Zsoka, Crosstown Parkway Extension Project Public Information Officer by email at beth.zsoka@gcausa.com or phone at 772-871-5176; or contact Sarah Prohaska, City of Port St. Lucie Public Information Officer at sprohaska@cityofpsl.com or 772-873-6326.