RESOLUTION 17-11-95

A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THAT THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO REPLACE THE SNAKE CREEK BRIDGE WITH A FIXED BRIDGE OR TUNNEL TO ALLOW AN UNRESTRICTED FLOW OF VEHICLE AND VESSEL TRAFFIC AND THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE TWO NORTH BOUND LANES OF EVACUATING TRAFFIC; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the Florida Keys, within Monroe County, are a chain of islands connected by 112 miles of US Highway 1 (U.S. 1), extending from Key Largo to Key West, representing the most southerly point of the continental United States; and

WHEREAS, the Snake Creek Bridge is a bascule bridge connecting Plantation Key and Windley Key and is located near mile marker 86 on U.S.1 within the jurisdictional boundaries of Islamorada, Village of Islands (the “Village”); and

WHEREAS, the Snake Creek Bridge was completed in 1981 and is the only remaining drawbridge operating in the Florida Keys and is maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”); and

WHEREAS, U.S. 1 serves as the main conduit for movement of resident, visitors and workforce and the Snake Creek Bridge as an operating drawbridge often causes traffic delays on U.S. 1 and has been identified as a bottleneck in the evacuation models for the Florida Keys; and

WHEREAS, since the Snake Creek Bridge was completed in 1981, the population of the Florida Keys has increased twenty-five percent (25%) (1980 population 63,188, 2010 census 73,090, 2016 population estimate 79,077); and

WHEREAS, in addition to the increased resident population, the Florida Keys, including Islamorada, Village of Islands (the “Village”), has become an increasingly popular tourist destination; and
WHEREAS, all vehicular travel through the Florida Keys occurs along the single highway, US 1; and

WHEREAS, currently, opening of the Snake Creek Bridge for boat traffic occurs at one-hour intervals between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, prior to March 16, 2015, the Snake Creek Drawbridge could be opened on demand at 30-minute intervals between 8am and 3pm each day, and outside of those hours, the drawbridge could be opened on demand at any time; and

WHEREAS, in June 2014, contact was made with the U.S. Coast Guard to begin the process of reducing the frequency of bridge openings, and in June 2016, a Final Rule became effective to allow on demand opening of the drawbridge once per hour from 7am to 6pm; and

WHEREAS, while the reduced schedule made notable improvements to traffic flow along US 1 through the Village, the continuing increase in the volume of vehicular traffic, primarily attributed to increased tourism, continues to create traffic backups, especially during and around weekends throughout the busy season and weekends during which there are multiple or large events; and

WHEREAS, during recent meetings between the Village, Monroe County, the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”) and other local government officials within the Florida Keys, the idea of further reducing the openings or eliminating the Snake Creek Bridge was raised to provide relief from traffic congestion within the Village; and

WHEREAS, protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the Florida Keys and maintaining the level of service of U. S. 1 is essential to the County and its municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the Village Council recognizes that the long-term solution to replace the drawbridge is many years in the future; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the evacuation needs in the Florida Keys and susceptibility from hurricane and other storm related events as well as overall affects to traffic,
the Village Council desires that replacing the Snake Creek Bridge with a fixed bridge or tunnel be implemented in the most expeditious manner possible.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1. Recitals.** The above recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference.

**Section 2. Requesting Action to Reduce Drawbridge Openings.** The Village Council of Islamorada, Village of Islands hereby requests that the Florida Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Transportation consider replacing the Snake Creek Bridge with a fixed bridge or tunnel to allow an unrestricted flow of vehicle and vessel traffic and that can accommodate two north bound lanes of evacuating traffic for improved evacuation clearance times.

**Section 3. Transmittal.** The Village Council hereby directs that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Florida Department of Transportation District Six, the United States Department of Transportation and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, as follows:

Mr. Mike Dew, Secretary Florida Department of Transportation 605 Suwannee Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

Mr. Jim Wolfe, Secretary District 6 Florida Department of Transportation 1000 N.W. 111 Avenue Miami, Florida 33172

Mr. George Neugent, Mayor Mr. Roman Gastesi, County Administrator Monroe County 1100 Simonton St. Key West, Florida 33040

Elaine L. Chao, U.S. Secretary of Transportation U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE Washington, DC 20590

**Section 4. Effective Date.** This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.
Motion to adopt by Councilwoman Deb Gillis, seconded by Councilman Mike Forster.

FINAL VOTE AT ADOPTION

VILLAGE COUNCIL OF ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS

 Mayor Jim Mooney       YES
 Vice Mayor Chris Sante  NO
 Councilman Mike Forster YES
 Councilwoman Deb Gillis YES
 Councilwoman Cheryl Meads YES

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON THIS 16TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2017.

ATTEST:

JIM MOONEY, MAYOR

KELLY TOTH, VILLAGE CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY
FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF
ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS ONLY

ROGET V. BRYAN, VILLAGE ATTORNEY