



Florida Department of Transportation

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FDOT Statement on Release of NTSB FIU Pedestrian Bridge Docket

Tallahassee, Fla. – After the Florida International University (FIU) pedestrian bridge collapse on March 15, 2018, the National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB) investigation was initiated immediately. At that time, the NTSB enforced a public records restriction on the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Today, the NTSB released the docket on their website, making all NTSB investigation records now publicly available.

FDOT Secretary Kevin J. Thibault commends the hard work, diligence and professionalism during the FIU Pedestrian Bridge collapse investigation. The Department appreciates and respects the 19-month investigative process the NTSB has followed to identify the causes of the FIU Pedestrian Bridge Collapse.

Secretary Thibault today said, “Since the enactment of the restriction on release of public documents by the NTSB, the Department has worked with the NTSB to proactively have the restriction lifted. The Department has always maintained that the public is entitled to them. We support full transparency by providing all documents related to the March 2018 tragedy that impacted the South Florida community and our entire state. Lives were lost and others have been changed forever, and we know these families, as well as the citizens of Florida, deserve answers and want closure.”

In the course of cooperating with the NTSB, Secretary Thibault charged his team to proactively release as many records as possible to the media. In May, the Department was able to reach an agreement with the NTSB to release the meeting minutes and other restricted records. In doing so, the Department was able to proactively look at its processes in connection with major Local Agency Program (LAP) projects. There are a couple of key aspects of the Department’s interaction with the project sponsor the Department clarified with the NTSB to ensure the Final Report achieves the ultimate purpose of ensuring this type of tragedy does not occur again.

The LAP manual has been amended to emphasize the critical importance of protecting public life, health and safety with respect to road closures for LAP projects. The LAP manual clearly requires local agencies, their design professionals, CEI consultants and contractors to immediately act to close State Highway System facilities when circumstances present material risks to the traveling public. The Department’s LAP manual has been amended to clearly emphasize that questions regarding road closures, which may be needed to prevent imminent risk of harm, must be immediately brought to the attention of appropriate Department employees.

The Department has updated the LAP manual and agreement to implement the passing of Section 334.175, Florida Statutes. The Department has established additional requirements for the LAP program addressing Department review and approval of LAP project designs before procurement. The LAP manual now requires design approval prior to LAP sponsor procurement. The manual has been expanded to include additional objective criteria and requirements regarding Department review of structure plans.

For example, the Department Structures Office will now have to approve a non-redundant bridge design over a state road for a LAP sponsor before the contract is procured.

The Department has amended its LAP manual to require design approval by our Central Office Structures Office. Consequently, on complex design structures, like the FIU pedestrian bridge, a Department project manager will be assigned to the project to provide more active Department involvement in a complex LAP project. This will include giving more specific guidance regarding consultant responsibilities to report information to Department management.

These improvements to the updated LAP Manual and LAP Agreement will now provide greater checks and balances to the consultants and individual program sponsors of LAP projects in the future.

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