

**HighSpans Engineering Inc. (HEI)** is pleased to provide this letter of response to perform engineering design, permitting, and limited construction phase services for the City of North Port for replacement of three existing timber pedestrian bridges adjacent to Sumter Blvd. and crossing Retention Ditches R-76 and R-86. The Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) specifies the tasks as: deliver permits, plans, specifications, construction cost estimate, and associated bid documents necessary for the project to be publicly bid for construction. HEI is providing this letter to demonstrate our technical expertise, understanding of the project requirements, and ability to deliver an economical design to restore pedestrian service to this important North Port public path.

## **PROJECT PLAN – UNDERSTANDING OF SCOPE AND DELIVERABLES**

**Task 1 - Project Kick-Off Meeting:** Our project management process emphasizes frequent communication with the Project Manager and Public Works/Engineering staff to ensure everyone is kept up to date on the status of the project plans and when plans are to be submitted for review. The project kick-off meeting provides an opportunity to refine the project approach to ensure we provide exactly what the City wants from the project. The kickoff meeting is also where the detailed project delivery schedule is finalized and other general coordination items are discussed as needed.

**Task 2 – Determination of Preferred Alternative:** Our design team understands the financial constraints of this project and is committed to evaluating every feasible alternative to restore the path connectivity at the three sites where the bridges have been closed. We have extensive experience with preparing accurate, up to date, and precise construction cost estimates, and our experience with recent similar projects ensures grounded cost evaluations. We also understand the request described in the RLI to investigate the removal of the bridge over R-86 and redirect the path to cross an existing culvert. This option could potentially save significant cost, but there are several questions to answer to confirm the feasibility of this option, including: is the area within the CONP Right of Way?; does CONP have future plans for this culvert that would conflict with its incorporation into the path?; and lastly, are there overhead or underground utilities that would be in conflict? Our Preferred Alternative Analysis would answer these questions by meeting with CONP Drainage and Utilities staff and by conducting a Right of Way determination survey to confirm property boundaries. Note that this bypass will likely require railings due to the nearby drop-off hazards.

For bridge replacements, the superstructure type will be investigated to ensure the design is economical, with options being prestressed concrete double-T beam and prefabricated steel truss. A preliminary cost estimate and overall construction time will be determined for the options and the pros and cons of each will be discussed with the City prior to selection. With the superstructure selected, the next major consideration will be the reuse of the existing foundations. We understand that existing bridge plans are unavailable, so we will utilize our in-house GPR testing capabilities to determine the dimensions and reinforcement as well as test concrete strength of cores in our in-house materials testing laboratory. With soil boring results at the bridge locations, this will allow us to analyze the foundations and determine their sufficiency for the proposed superstructure. From our field evaluations, we know that one of the foundations over R-76 has partial undermining at the channel as well as differential settlement that has created a 4% cross slope. If this foundation is to remain, this settlement must be arrested by soil improvement and remediation. This is typically addressed by grout injection to harden the soil and increase the bearing capacity, which we have designed for similar applications in the past. As mentioned, all initial investigation findings and recommended options will be coordinated with the City.

**Task 3 - Bridge Design and Permitting:** All bridge design will be in accordance with FBC, FDOT, and AASHTO codes with the primary requirements coming from the AASHTO LRFD Guide Specifications for the Design of Pedestrian bridges. We will also coordinate with the City to ensure our design accommodates any special maintenance vehicles. Plans will be accompanied by all necessary specifications and bid schedules to allow for public bidding of the project. All submittals will be accompanied by construction cost and time estimates which will also be provided for alternative discussions as mentioned previously. Throughout the process, several biddability and constructability reviews will be conducted to eliminate issues with executing the replacements. Our permitting efforts will begin following the kick-off meeting with the City to ensure the schedule is not affected. An environmental assessment will first be completed at each project location to identify possible complications, and key utilities will be identified early in the design. A key utility has already been identified from our field evaluations as there is a sub-aqueous water main crossing at R-76. Upon completion of 60% plans, we will pursue all required permits while plans are finalized. To ease the permitting process with SWFWMD, replacement bridges will be designed with the same hydraulic opening and elevations as the existing structure to ensure no adverse impacts to water flow.

**Deliverables:** The final deliverable will be construction ready plans, specifications, and estimates signed and sealed by a Professional Engineer of the State of Florida with all associated bid documents and permits. Prior to this final submittal, we will submit 60% plans, specifications, and Engineer's Opinion of Probable Cost (EOPC) which will be utilized to obtain necessary permits. 90% plans, specifications, EOPC, and estimated construction duration would follow with further detail including changes from 60% City comments and permitting feedback. Upon receipt of 90% City comments and all necessary permits, 100% (not signed and sealed) plans, specifications, EOPC, and estimated construction duration will be provided as well as a bid schedule in Excel file format. Each preliminary phase submittal (60%, 90%, and 100%) shall allow 10 business days for comments by the City with comment responses provided by HighSpans shortly thereafter and corresponding changes reflected in the next submittal.

**ABILITY AND RELEVANT EXPERTISE/QUALIFICATIONS OF FIRM'S PERSONNEL**

Our firm maintains continuing services contracts providing structural inspections, analysis, and design throughout Southwest Florida, including the City of North Port. We are experienced in executing short duration contracts where the focus is on rapid project delivery, reduced construction cost, durable low maintenance structures, and a trouble-free bidding process for construction. We maintain FDOT Prequalification in all relevant work categories including 4.1.2 (Minor Bridge Design), 4.2.1 (Major Bridge Design Concrete), 4.2.3 (Major Bridge Segmental), and 5.4 (Bridge Load Rating) among many others and have a staff that is technically qualified well beyond the minimum requirements of this project. The project will be led by Thomas M. Waits, P.E., who will be supported on this project by a team of highly qualified registered engineers, CADD and drafting staff, and field inspection personnel. The key staff members on this project will be:

**Thomas M. Waits, PE – Project Manager/Engineer of Record:** Tom will lead the design staff and coordinate all project tasks including structures, roadway, hydraulics, drainage, utilities, and environmental permitting, ensuring all technical requirements and contract schedules are met. He will also ensure that CONP staff comments are addressed, and final bid packages (Plans, Specifications, and Construction Cost Estimate) meet City expectations. Tom brings over 30 years of civil, transportation and bridge engineering experience to this project including an 8-year period as Area Structures Engineer for FDOT Districts 4 and 7, where he oversaw and reviewed many of the States largest design-build projects. Since joining HighSpans in 2019 he has served as EOR/PM on many pedestrian bridge projects including Corkscrew Rd Bridges, Alico Rd Bridges, Estero Parkway Bridge Repairs, Ford Canal Bridge at Michigan Ave, and Orange River Bridge Repairs.

**Mica Jackson, PE – Drainage and Utilities Engineer:** Mica will lead all utility relocation design and coordination and work directly with local utility owners to secure RGBs and develop Utility Work Schedules to ensure a smooth execution of all necessary utility adjustments. Projects where he has served a similar role include Hagie Drive Bridge Replacement, Constitution Circle Bridge Replacement, and Estero River Pedestrian Bridge. Since joining HighSpans in 2020, he has applied his expertise in CAD design, civil engineering, permitting, stormwater and utility modeling, and project management to successfully deliver multiple complex projects.

**Jason Hock, PE, SE, MSCE – Lead Structural Engineer:** Jason will perform structural analysis and design, detailing, and other related tasks to ensure plans, specifications, and construction cost estimates are fully biddable, constructable, and compliant with AASHTO and FDOT criteria. He will also lead construction-phase tasks, including shop drawing and RFI reviews, inspections, and coordination with other disciplines. Jason brings over five years of HighSpans experience on bridges and buildings. His work spans reinforced, prestressed, and post-tensioned concrete, steel, and composite structures, as well as structural repairs. Jason is officially recognized as a Structural Engineer by the Florida Board of Professional Engineers.

**Christopher Gallagher, PE – Lead Geotechnical Engineer:** Chris has over 10 years of geotechnical experience covering a broad range of geotechnical design, analysis and investigation activities involving deep foundations, retaining walls, soil remediation design, seawall design, and culverts. He is experienced in all stages of investigation, from field exploration and lab testing to analysis of capacity, settlement, slope stability, and foundation verification. He has served on FDOT and local projects, including Sanibel Causeway, Estero River Pedestrian Bridge, and Spencer's Boatyard Seawall.

In addition to staff listed above, HighSpans will be assisted in carrying out this contract by personnel provided by SUBCONSULTANTS **Pennoni Associates, Inc.** (Pennoni) who will be performing all necessary topographic survey and environmental permitting services, as well as **AREHNA Engineering Inc.** who will be performing soil borings. We have teamed with both Pennoni and AREHNA on numerous recent projects and have an excellent working relationship with them.

**AVAILABILITY OF STAFF**

Our staff has immediate availability to successfully deliver this project and we have already initiated verbal agreements with our subconsultant (Pennoni) to conduct the field work. The HighSpans staff has recently completed several projects and has plenty of availability as shown in the table to the right.

Projects Currently Under Contract	Owner	% Comp
Lakes Park Boardwalk Reconstruction	Lee County	95%
Alico Connector Bridges	Lee County	75%
Fleishman Park Structures	Fort Myers	95%
Admin Bldg. A/C Structure	Lee County	90%
Pedestrian Bridge Inspections	North Port	50%
Hagie/Constitution Bridge Replacements	Lee County	20%
San Carlos Park Reconstruction	Lee County	20%

**COST SAVING MEASURES**

As mentioned by the City in the RLI, use of the existing foundations will significantly decrease construction time and costs. To this end, we will conduct extensive testing as previously described to accurately characterize the existing foundations. This testing effort will eliminate unknowns surrounding the structure and as a result will eliminate the need for an overly conservative approach which could wrongly call for costly replacements. HighSpans has also utilized precast concrete double-T structures on similarly sized pedestrian bridges. In these previous projects, cost estimates showed significant savings over the traditional prefabricated steel trusses.



**CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM**

F.S. §112.313 places limitations on public officers (including advisory board members) and employees' ability to contract with the City either directly or indirectly. Therefore, please indicate if the following applies:

**PART I.**

- I am an employee, public officer or advisory board member of the City  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(List Position Or Board)**
  
- I am the spouse or child of an employee, public officer or advisory board member of the City  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
  
- An employee, public officer or advisory board member of the City, or their spouse or child, is an officer, partner, director, or proprietor of Respondent or has a material interest in Respondent. "Material interest" means direct or indirect ownership of more than 5 percent of the total assets or capital stock of any business entity. For the purposes of [§112.313], indirect ownership does not include ownership by a spouse or minor child.  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Respondent employs or contracts with an employee, public officer or advisory board member of the City  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
  
- None Of The Above

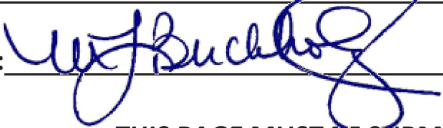
**PART II:**

Are you going to request an advisory board member waiver?

- I will request an advisory board member waiver under §112.313(12)
- I will NOT request an advisory board member waiver under §112.313(12)
- N/A

The City shall review any relationships which may be prohibited under the Florida Ethics Code and will disqualify any vendors whose conflicts are not waived or exempt.

**COMPANY:** HighSpans Engineering, Inc.

**SIGNATURE:** 

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH LETTER OF INTEREST**

**DISCLOSURE FORM**  
**FOR**  
**CONSULTANT/ENGINEER/ARCHITECT**

**Please select (only) one of the following three options:**

Our firm has no actual, potential, or reasonably perceived, **financial\*** or **other interest\*\*** in the outcome of the project.

Our firm has a potential or reasonably perceived **financial\*** or **other interest\*\*** in the outcome of the project as described here: \_\_\_\_\_.

Our firm proposes to mitigate the potential or perceived conflict according to the following plan: \_\_\_\_\_.

Our firm has an actual **financial\*** or **other interest\*\*** in the outcome of the project as described here: \_\_\_\_\_.

**\*What does "financial interest" mean?**

If your firm, or employee of your firm working on the project (or a member of the employee's household), will/may be perceived to receive or lose private income depending on the government business choices based on your firm's findings and recommendations, this must be listed as a financial interest. An example would be ownership in physical assets affected by the government business choices related to this project. The possibility of contracting for further consulting services is not included in this definition and is not prohibited.

**\*\*What does "other interest" mean?**

If your firm, or employee of your firm working on the project (or a member of the employee's household), will/may be perceived to have political, legal or any other interests that will affect what goes into your firm's findings and recommendations, or will be/may be perceived to be affected by the government business choices related to this project, this must be listed as another interest.

**BUSINESS NAME:** HighSpans Engineering, Inc.

**NAME (PERSON AUTHORIZED TO BIND THE COMPANY):** Michelle L. Buchholz

**SIGNATURE:**  **DATE:** 01/13/2026

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH LETTER OF INTEREST**

**Scrutinized Company Certification Form**

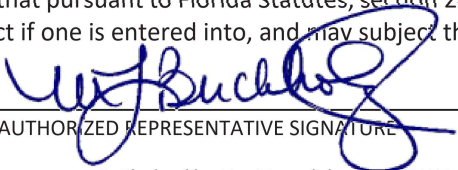
Company Name: <u>HighSpans Engineering, Inc.</u>			
Authorized Representative Name and Title: <u>Michelle L. Buchholz, SVP &amp; CFO</u>			
Address: <u>2121 McGregor Blvd, Suite 200</u>	City: <u>Fort Myers</u>	State: <u>FL</u>	ZIP: <u>33901</u>
Phone Number: <u>239-433-3000</u>	Email Address: <u>SBuchholz@HighSpans.com</u>		

A company is ineligible to, and may not, bid on, submit a proposal for, or enter into or renew a contract with the City of North Port for goods or services of any amount if, at the time of bidding on, submitting a proposal for, or entering into or renewing such contract, the company is on the Scrutinized Companies that Boycott Israel List, created pursuant to Florida Statutes, section 215.4725, or is engaged in a boycott of Israel.

A company is ineligible to, and may not, bid on, submit a proposal for, or enter into or renew a contract with the City of North Port for goods or services of \$1 million or more if, at the time of bidding on, submitting a proposal for, or entering into or renewing such contract, the company is on the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in Sudan List, the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in the Iran Petroleum Energy Sector List, created pursuant to Florida Statutes, section 215.473, or with companies engaged in business operations in Cuba or Syria.

**CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING**

- This bid, proposal, contract or contract renewal is for goods or services of less than \$1 million. As the person authorized to sign on behalf of the above-named company, and as required by Florida Statutes, section 287.135(5), I hereby certify that the above-named company is not participating in a boycott of Israel.
  
- This bid, proposal, contract or contract renewal is for goods or services of \$1 million or more. As the person authorized to sign on behalf of the above-named company, and as required by Florida Statutes, section 287.135(5), I hereby certify that the above-named company is not participating in a boycott of Israel, is not on the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in Sudan List or the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in the Iran Petroleum Energy Sector List, and it does not have business operations in Cuba or Syria.

I understand that pursuant to Florida Statutes, section 287.135, the submission of a false certification may result in the termination of the contract if one is entered into, and may subject the above-named company to civil penalties, attorney's fees and costs.	
Certified By: 	_____
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE	
Print Name and Title: <u>Michelle L. Buchholz, SVP &amp; CFO</u>	_____
Date Certified: <u>01/13/2026</u>	_____

**Solicitation/Contract/PO Number (Completed by Purchasing):** \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH LETTER OF INTEREST**

**VENDOR'S CERTIFICATION FOR E-VERIFY SYSTEM**

The undersigned Vendor/Consultant/Contractor (Vendor), certifies the following:

1. Vendor is a person or entity that has entered into or is attempting to enter into a contract with the City of North Port (City) to provide labor, supplies, or services to the City in exchange for salary, wages or other remuneration.
2. Vendor has registered with and will use the E-Verify System of the United States Department of Homeland Security to verify the employment eligibility of:
  - a. All persons newly hired by the Vendor to perform employment duties within Florida during the term of the contract; and
  - b. All persons, including sub-contractors or sub-consultants, assigned by the Vendor to perform work pursuant to the contract with the City.
3. If the Vendor becomes the successful Contractor who enters into a contract with the City, then the Vendor will comply with the requirements of Section 448.095, Fla. Stat. "Employment Eligibility", as amended from time to time.
4. Vendor will obtain an affidavit from all subcontractors attesting that the subcontractor does not employ, contract with, or subcontract with, an unauthorized alien as defined in 8 United States Code, Section 1324A(H)(3).
5. Vendor will maintain the original affidavit of all subcontractors for the duration of the contract.
6. Vendor affirms that failure to comply with the state law requirements can result in the City's termination of the contract and other penalties as provided by law.
7. Vendor understands that pursuant to Florida Statutes, section 448.095, the submission of a false certification may result in the termination of the contract if one is entered into and may subject the Vendor named in this certification to civil penalties, attorney's fees and costs.

VENDOR: HighSpans Engineering, Inc. (Vendor's Company Name)

Certified By:   
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Print Name and Title: Michelle L. Buchholz, SVP & CFO

Date Certified: 01/13/2026

**THIS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED**