



July 20, 2020

The Honorable David E. Price  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On March 15, 2018, a pedestrian bridge under construction at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami collapsed onto the highway below, resulting in 6 fatalities and 10 injuries. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigated the cause of the collapse and issued its report on October 22, 2019.<sup>1</sup> In addition, our office conducted two audits related to the FIU project in response to requests from the Secretary of Transportation and the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. On October 29, 2018, we issued an initial audit report on the Department of Transportation's (DOT) role in the grant application and selection processes for the FIU project.<sup>2</sup> On May 12, 2020, we issued a follow-on audit that addressed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) oversight role in the FIU and other projects.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NTSB, *Pedestrian Bridge Collapse Over SW 8th Street, Miami, Florida, March 15, 2018*, highway accident report (NTSB/HAR-19/02), October 22, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> *Initial Audit of Florida International University Pedestrian Bridge Project—Assessment of DOT's TIGER Grant Review and Selection Processes* (OIG Report No. ST2019002), October 29, 2018. OIG reports are available on our website: <https://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Gaps in FHWA's Guidance and the Florida Division's Process for Risk-Based Project Involvement May Limit Their Effectiveness* (OIG Report No. ST2020035), May 12, 2020.

The explanatory statement accompanying the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Act directed OIG to provide information on the firms involved in the design, construction, and inspection of the FIU pedestrian bridge, including details on any safety violations or prior criminal convictions. We also met with staff from the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies to discuss the mandate and inform our approach.

The enclosed presentation summarizes our review of the firms involved with the FIU pedestrian bridge, which we can discuss with your staff at your convenience. We identified these firms from project files, as well as reports and documents associated with investigations conducted by NTSB and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). We then searched Federal databases for information about the businesses themselves, including whether they had been cited for safety violations or had prior criminal convictions. Overall, we identified 41 firms that were involved in the design, construction, or inspection of the FIU pedestrian bridge. In addition, we found that:

- OSHA cited 17 of the 41 firms for workplace safety violations between January 2010 and January 2020. Five of those firms were also cited for safety violations related to the FIU bridge collapse.<sup>4</sup>
- As of April 2020, none of the 41 firms had been disqualified from receiving contracts involving Federal funds or certain types of Federal assistance.<sup>5</sup> On July 14, 2020, FHWA suspended and proposed to debar FIGG Bridge Engineers—the firm that designed the FIU pedestrian bridge—for a period of 10 years.<sup>6</sup>
- As of April 2020, none of the 41 firms had prior Federal criminal convictions.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at (202) 366-1959 or David Pouliott, Assistant Inspector General for Surface Transportation Audits, at (202) 366-1844.

Sincerely,



Howard R. "Skip" Elliott  
Acting Inspector General

Enclosure

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<sup>4</sup> According to OSHA, the firms have contested the alleged violations, which remain unresolved as of June 17, 2020—pending an independent review by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Information on the suspension and debarment of firms is maintained in the System for Award Management by the General Services Administration.

<sup>6</sup> FHWA is taking these actions to protect the public interest based on the firm's conduct related to the FIU pedestrian bridge collapse. The firm may contest FHWA's actions as part of the suspension and debarment process.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Office of Inspector General

# FIU Pedestrian Bridge: Information on Involved Firms

Information for the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations

July 20, 2020

# **Background: The FIU Project and Pedestrian Bridge Collapse**

# Background – The FIU Project and Bridge Collapse

- On March 15, 2018, a pedestrian bridge under construction at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami collapsed onto the highway below, resulting in 6 fatalities and 10 injuries.
- Building the bridge was part of the FIU University City Prosperity Project funded in part by a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) selected the project for a grant in August 2013 and signed the grant agreement in June 2014. Within DOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is primarily responsible for overseeing the FIU project.
- In addition to the pedestrian bridge, the overall FIU project included other pedestrian-oriented transit access infrastructure improvements, as well as community transit service development enhancements, and a component to develop an informed traveler program and applications.



## Background (cont.)

- The cause of the FIU pedestrian bridge collapse was investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which issued its report on October 22, 2019.
  - In September 2018, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) also cited 5 firms involved with the pedestrian bridge for safety violations. According to OSHA, the firms have contested the alleged violations, which remain unresolved as of June 17, 2020—pending an independent review by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.
- OIG conducted two audits related to the FIU project in response to requests from the Secretary of Transportation and the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
  - On October 29, 2018, we issued an initial audit report on DOT's role in the grant application and selection processes for the FIU project.
  - On May 12, 2020, we issued a follow-on audit that addressed FHWA's oversight role in the FIU and other projects.



# Scope of OIG Work: FIU Mandate

# Scope of OIG Work

- The explanatory statement accompanying the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Act directed OIG to provide information on the firms involved in the design, construction, and inspection of the FIU pedestrian bridge, including any safety violations or prior criminal convictions.
- On March 18, 2019, OIG staff met with staff from the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies to discuss the mandate. Committee staff provided additional information and direction that informed our approach for addressing the mandate.



# Methodology for OIG Work

- To address the mandate, we performed the following steps:
  - Identified those firms involved in the design, construction, or inspection of the structure from project records and documents from NTSB and OSHA investigations.
  - Searched OSHA's database for information on prior safety violations of the firms.
  - Searched the General Services Administration's System for Award Management (SAM) database, for suspension and debarment actions related to the firms.
  - Searched Federal court records to determine whether the firms had any prior criminal convictions.



# Safety Record of Firms – FHWA Role

- While FHWA does not maintain data on firms' accident history, violations, or structural issues, the Agency requires State DOTs to ensure that firms are not disqualified from receiving Federal Government contracts (23 CFR § 630.112).
  - In addition, FHWA allows State DOTs to establish procedures for the licensing and qualification of firms as long as those procedures do not restrict competition (23 CFR §§ 635.110, 635.114). For example, State DOTs may require firms to self-report certain information and/or track the firms' performance on past State projects as part of their qualification procedures.
- FHWA maintains overall oversight responsibility for the transportation projects it funds, which includes ensuring financial integrity and compliance with applicable Federal laws and regulations.
  - A State DOT may also assume certain responsibilities as prescribed by law and in accordance with FHWA's risk-based stewardship and oversight framework.



# **FIU Pedestrian Bridge: Information on Involved Firms**

# FIU Pedestrian Bridge – Summary of Involved Firms

- We identified 41 firms (see list in next section) involved in the design, construction, or inspection of the FIU pedestrian bridge.
- FIU awarded contracts for preliminary engineering services to J. Bonfill and Associates and T. Y. Lin International.
- Subsequently, FIU awarded the overall design-build contract for the project to MCM. As the general contractor, MCM subcontracted portions of the work to other firms, including FIGG, for design and engineering services.
- FIU also awarded a contract for construction engineering and inspection services to Bolton Perez & Associates.
- As the supervising agency, Florida DOT contracted with firms to supplement its resources, help administer its local agency program, and review the project's design.



# FIU Pedestrian Bridge – Safety Record of Firms

- OSHA cited 17 of the 41 firms involved with the FIU pedestrian bridge for workplace safety violations between January 2010 and January 2020.
  - The total number of violations per cited firm ranged from 1 to over 300.
- In September 2018—6 months after the bridge collapsed—OSHA cited 5 firms with related safety violations (see list in next section).
  - OSHA’s investigation determined that the firms failed to protect workers when indications of a potential bridge collapse were evident, exposed employees to crushing and fall hazards, and allowed multiple employees to connect to an improperly installed lifeline.
  - The firms have contested the alleged violations, which—according to OSHA—remain unresolved as of June 17, 2020.
- OSHA-reported violations on other projects include a variety of safety infractions, such as employees standing near unsecured construction materials and operating forklifts without wearing seatbelts.



# FIU Pedestrian Bridge – Additional Firm Information

- We found that, as of April 2020, none of the 41 firms had been disqualified from receiving contracts involving Federal funds or certain types of Federal assistance.
  - Specifically, the SAM database did not list any active or inactive exclusions for the firms. An exclusion record indicates that the listed firm is suspended or debarred from receiving contracts involving Federal funds and certain types of Federal assistance.
- On July 14, 2020, FHWA suspended and proposed to debar FIGG Bridge Engineers—the firm that designed the pedestrian bridge—for a period of 10 years.
  - FHWA’s suspension and debarment process allows the firm to challenge the facts supporting the Agency’s actions and, if material facts are at issue, to appear in a fact-finding proceeding.
  - FHWA is taking these actions to protect the public interest based on the firm’s conduct related to the FIU pedestrian bridge collapse.



# FIU Pedestrian Bridge – Additional Firm Information

- We found that, as of April 2020, none of the 41 firms had prior Federal criminal convictions. However:
  - Criminal cases may be resolved through means other than a conviction, such as a non-prosecution or deferred prosecution agreement. In addition, cases can be dismissed or result in an acquittal.
  - The scope of our search did not include records of criminal cases in State or local courts.



# **FIU Pedestrian Bridge: List of Involved Firms**

# FIU Pedestrian Bridge – List of Involved Firms

Our review found that the following firms were involved in the design, construction, or inspection of the FIU pedestrian bridge. While this list is inclusive, it is not necessarily exhaustive, as the scope of our work did not include corroborating the involvement of all firms associated with the project.

#	Firm Name	Role	Contracted By
1	J. Bonfill and Associates	Preliminary engineering	FIU
2	T.Y. Lin International	Preliminary engineering	FIU
3	Munilla Construction Management (MCM) <sup>a</sup>	General contractor for design and construction	FIU
4	FIGG Bridge Engineers (FIGG) <sup>a b</sup>	Design and engineering services / Engineer of record	MCM
5	Louis Berger Group	Design review services	FIGG
6	Network Engineering Services / Bolton Perez & Associates (BPA) <sup>a</sup>	Construction engineering and inspection services (CEI)	FIU

<sup>a</sup> Cited by OSHA for safety violations related to the FIU pedestrian bridge collapse, which have been contested by the firms and are pending resolution.

<sup>b</sup> On July 14, 2020, FHWA suspended and proposed to debar FIGG from receiving contracts involving Federal funds and certain types of Federal assistance for a period of 10 years. The firm may contest the Agency's actions as part of the suspension and debarment process.



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#	Firm Name	Role	Contracted By
7	Keith and Schnars, P.A.	Local area program coordination	Florida DOT
8	AECOM	Design review services	Florida DOT
9	RC Group	Construction / Formwork and scaffolding	MCM
10	The Structural Group of South Florida <sup>a</sup>	Construction / Concrete placement	MCM
11	Structural Technologies <sup>a</sup>	Construction / Post-tensioning	MCM
12	Barnhart Crane & Rigging (BCR)	Construction / Movement of the prefabricated bridge span	MCM
13	Bridge Diagnostics	Construction / Bridge move monitoring	BCR
14	Matrax	Construction / Bridge move matting	MCM

<sup>a</sup> Cited by OSHA for safety violations related to the FIU pedestrian bridge collapse, which have been contested by the firms and are pending resolution.



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#	Firm Name	Role	Contracted By
15	George's Crane Service	Construction / Crane equipment and services	MCM
16	Allegiance Crane & Equipment	Construction / Crane services	MCM
17	AE Engineering	CEI / Compliance oversight	BPA
18	C.H. Perez & Associates Consulting Engineers	CEI / Surveying	BPA
19	Professional Services Industries	CEI / Concrete testing	BPA
20	The Corradino Group	CEI / Post-tensioning inspections	BPA
21	A&P Consulting Transportation Engineers	Design / Roadway	FIGG
22	GEOSOL	Design / Geotechnical engineering	FIGG



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#	Firm Name	Role	Contracted By
23	M.G. Vera & Associates	Design / Surveying	FIGG
24	Randy Burkett Lighting Design	Design / Bridge lighting	FIGG
25	Beton Consulting Engineers	Design / Concrete	FIGG
26	Beyel Bros.	Construction / Crane services	MCM
27	Chuck's Backhoe Services	Construction / Excavation	MCM
28	J.A. Azpeitia	Construction / Excavation	MCM
29	Concrete Holding & Service	Construction / Concrete pumping	MCM
30	Dongalen Enterprises	Construction / Shims	MCM
31	E&L Support Services	Construction / Concrete plans	MCM
32	M&M Steel	Construction / Metal and hardware	MCM



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#	Firm Name	Role	Contracted By
33	The Ultimate Electrician	Construction / Lighting and electrical	MCM
34	Toledo Iron Work	Construction / Bridge fencing	MCM
35	Watson Bowman Acme	Construction / Expansion joints	MCM
36	Universal Engineering Sciences	Construction / Materials testing	MCM
37	D S Brown	Construction / Bearing pads	MCM
38	Florida Concrete Products	Construction / Drainage and piles	MCM
39	Tampa Tank	Construction / Anchor bolts and pipe stays	MCM
40	Safway Services / Brandsafway Services	Construction / Scaffolding	MCM
41	Cemex Construction Materials Florida	Construction / Cement	MCM

