In 1995, FDOT rehabilitated the bridge, including much of the operating machinery, and restored its historic appearance. Consequently, the bridge maintains its historic physical integrity and continues to represent a structure of distinctive quality and high historical importance.

The Platt Street Bridge
Hillsborough County
FDOT #105500, 8HI0862

Photo 5-78. Platt Street Bridge, Hillsborough County (No. 105500)

The 1926 Platt Street Bridge over the Hillsborough River was designed by the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company of Chicago. The City of Tampa Engineer, R.D. Martin, prepared the specifications, and the bridge was constructed by Tibbets, Pleasant, Green and Beckman, general contractors of Oklahoma City. This firm also constructed the upriver Cass Street Bridge, almost identical in design, and these are likely their only structures in Florida. The Lakeside Bridge and Steel Company of Milwaukee fabricated the spans.

The original bridge structure, which extended 518 feet, consisted of 10 arched concrete tee-beam girder approach spans joined to a double-leaf Strauss trunnion bascule main span, 103 feet in length. In 1990, when the adjacent Tampa Convention Center was under construction, the railings on the south side and the bridge approach spans were removed. "Additionally, it appears that the easternmost 4 approach spans that were located over land are no longer extant or have been filled in so they are not readily visible."[137] As a result, the bridge currently extends 336 feet, and is composed of eight spans. The main bascule span is 82.5 feet in length.

Photo 5-79. Detail of Eight-Point Star Railing Decoration.

A distinctive concrete railing featuring a geometric pattern that resembles an eight-point star (**Photo 5-80**) continues to the seawall and balustrade along Bayshore Boulevard, which intersects Platt Street near the west end of the bridge, and Tony Jannus Park, located on the northwest side of the bridge. The same design appears on the metal railing along the bascule span. The Bayshore Boulevard sidewalk continues as a pedestrian walkway under the western end of the bridge. The Mediterranean Revival style influences found on the bridge reflect Florida's fascination with that architectural theme during the Land Boom period of the 1920s. The style is reflected in the two octagonally-shaped and stuccoed tender stations, which feature hipped roofs clad in metal shingles with highly ornate metal trim including projecting acanthus

[137] Janus Research, FMSF form for 8HI862 (update), September 27, 2004.

leaves and lion's heads. These two-story buildings stand at each end of the bascule and on opposite sides of the roadway.

As Bayshore Boulevard became the main artery on the east side of south Tampa, the Platt Street Bridge served as the southernmost connection between the east and west banks of the Hillsborough River and as south Tampa's link with the central business district. As part of a major bridge building program initiated by the city in 1924, the Platt Street Bridge was intended to relieve the congestion on the Lafayette Street Bridge (now the Kennedy Boulevard Bridge), as well as to connect Bayshore Boulevard to downtown. Platt Street was named after O. H. Platt. Platt came to Tampa in the late 1880s and developed the Hyde Park area. He named his new development after his hometown of Hyde Park, Illinois.

The Platt Street Bridge was determined NRHP-eligible by the SHPO in 2005. The architectural embellishments signify both the affluence of the era and the importance given to the bridge's place at the confluence of Hillsborough Bay and the Hillsborough River. Thus, age, type, aesthetic qualities, landmark position, and association with the 1920s expansion of Tampa all contribute to the bridge's historical value. This bridge retains its historic integrity. It is significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation and Community Planning and Development, primarily based on its association with the growth and development of Tampa during the early part of the 20th century. It also meets NRHP Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Engineering as an early example of a double-leaf trunnion bascule bridge designed by the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company, and for the aesthetics of the Mediterranean Revival style detailing.

Cass Street Bridge
Hillsborough County
FDOT #105502, 8HI6670

Photo 5-80. Cass Street Bridge, Hillsborough County (No. 105502)

The 1927 Cass Street Bridge over the Hillsborough River was designed by the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company of Chicago and constructed by Tibbets, Pleasant, Green and Beckman, of Oklahoma City. It is near identical in all of its major architectural and historical characteristics to the Platt Street Bridge. It also features 10 reinforced concrete tee-beam approach spans and a double-leaf Strauss trunnion bascule main span, as well as the distinctive eight-point star railing and Mediterranean Revival style tender stations.

Tampa's need to expand its road system across the Hillsborough River and into the western suburbs during the great spurt in growth of the 1920s led to the construction of the Cass Street and Platt Street Bridges, which were erected under the same contract that spanned 1925 and 1926. Although reconstructed in 1949, this bridge maintains its historic physical integrity. The Cass Street Bridge was determined NRHP-eligible by the SHPO in 2002. It is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Engineering as an early example of a bascule bridge with Mediterranean Revival detailing.