

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting  
Agenda Item F-11  
October 22, 2024  
City Commission Chambers  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago  
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson  
Commissioner Melissa Castro  
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez  
Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.  
City Attorney, Cristina Suárez  
City Clerk, Billy Urquia  
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz  
Assistant Public Works Director, Melissa DeZayas  
Police Chief, Ed Hudak**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Nicole Puerto  
Catherine Arriola  
Matilda Kalaveshi  
Jessie Pelletier  
Roland Rodriguez  
Maria Cruz  
Robert Ruano  
Jackson Holmes**

---

Agenda Item F-11 [12:41 p.m.]  
Discussion regarding the Alhambra Circle sidewalk.

---

City Commission Meeting  
October 22, 2024  
Agenda Item F-11 - Discussion regarding the Alhambra Circle sidewalk.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Castro)

Mayor Lago: Item F-11, discussion regarding the Alhambra Circle sidewalks, F-11.

Commissioner Castro: Okay, that -- that is my item. There we go. Thank you, Hermes.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good morning.

Commissioner Castro: Good morning.

Mayor Lago: Good morning. Good to see you.

Commissioner Castro: I had requested a third option, and I know that we've -- I've received several emails from both of you exploring the option of a third option. I know you have a presentation.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Beautiful.

City Clerk Urquia: I don't have the presentation. Did you send it to me?

Public Works Director Diaz: Um-hmm.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: When?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Last week.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. Do we want to maybe take another item and come back to here -- come back to it?

City Clerk Urquia: Sure. Mr. Mayor, if you could take F-1 first and then we'll come back to this one.

Mayor Lago: Take F-1.

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll be back.

[Later...]

Commissioner Castro: This is a discussion regarding Alhambra Circle sidewalks. Thank you for waiting.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good morning, Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Good morning, Melissa DeZayas, Transportation Division Manager.

Public Works Director Diaz: Actually, good afternoon.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Melissa DeZayas, Transportation Division Manager. So, at the last City Commission meeting, we were asked to come up with another option where we were looking at, you know, putting a sidewalk at the right-of-way line. So, internally, we developed a concept. We had our surveyor go out and mark where the path of the sidewalk would go. We had our arborist go out and review it. And we analyzed the tree impacts for each location where there was a tree. This is an overall plan view. We're going to go more into detail on each slide. So, according to the City Code, anything like a tree modification includes cutting any roots greater than 2 inches in diameter of a specimen tree. A specimen tree is any tree that's 18 inches or greater DBH within 6 feet of the trunk, cutting more than 25 percent of the roots of a specimen tree within the drip line to a depth of greater than six inches.

Public Works Director Diaz: And something I'd like to add, just to make sure that it's clear, the tree protection code, as the way that it's written in the code, it allows for you to cut beyond that percentage subject to the approval of Landscape Services. Deena, unfortunately, couldn't be here with us, but Melissa and I had also a conversation about this, and I will say that she is very uncomfortable of going beyond the tree zone, cut it from what is currently on the code. And our recommendation will be that any tree that will require roots to be cut in excess of that number to be removed. But the code doesn't say that you can't. It says subject to approval. I just want to make that clear.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: So, the tree protection zone that Hermes' referring to is you basically calculate a minimum of one foot away from the trunk for every one inch of trunk radius. And no more than 25 percent of those roots in this zone should be cut at one time, you know, according to the City Code. So, for each of the 16 trees that we have within the limits of this project, we got the tree diameter, and we calculated the root protection zone. We also offset that six foot where you're not supposed to cut, you know, any structural roots. And we calculated the percentage of the trees (INAUDIBLE) that 25 percent that's mentioned in the Code, any of the trees that are in red here are ones that are exceeding the 25 percent. The green just indicates that they're a specimen tree. Oh, my bad. So, there were two trees that, you know, they have asterisks next to them. If we tried to put in the six-foot sidewalk that we were planning throughout, they exceeded the 25 percent. We analyzed it further and we minimized it to five feet at those locations

to see if we could salvage the tree. So, now we're going to go through each individual tree and show like a little clip of what it looks like. So, for each of the slides that are coming up, that red circle is a six-foot offset from the tree trunk and the yellow circle is the tree protection zone. According to the arborist report, this tree is in poor condition, so we're recommending to remove.

Commissioner Castro: This is a question, so you cannot frame the road just before the bridge as Vice Mayor had suggested before?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: The request for this location, well throughout the whole, you know, project limits as per the last Commission meeting was to put it at the right-of-way line. We went out with the arborist, and the arborist said that due to the condition of this tree, he had already listed it as poor condition, they would just recommend to remove.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That was one of the ones that I had suggested remove as well. I've looked at it. I do think curbing on an entire block is necessary to funnel the cars away from the bridge posts with modern technology that we have today on the cars, with the striping and so forth, it directs people away from the striping and you'll have fewer accidents.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, the direction that we were given on these drawings to throw the sidewalk to the property line and that's what we've done.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I understand.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: But I'm talking about from the standpoint -- I mean, I've been on Granada, I've used the sidewalk there, I pick it up at the corner at the beginning of the block, and I exit on the opposite end of it so that there's a continuous flow there.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, it's the best way to keep cars away from the bridge and to protect the bicyclists so they can use the pedestrian walkway bridge there.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Okay, so tree number two, this is another specimen black olive tree. It's in fair condition. It has a 39-inch diameter, so the root protection zone is 42 feet. If we were to put in a 6-foot sidewalk, that would be 28 percent. If we were to narrow it down to the 5 feet, it would be 26 percent. So, this one can remain. The only thing is that you can see it's like just touching that six-foot offset from the tree trunk, so we have to be very careful about cutting any structural roots there.

Vice Mayor Anderson: How wide would it be, a shared-use path, if it was there?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Typically shared-use paths are about 10 feet.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, the bicycles and pedestrians can use the sidewalk.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: You can get a variance for I think down to like eight, but ten is preferred.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. But I think it would be eight feet for like a reduced section where you have some conflicts. It wouldn't be over a significant length.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, tree number five. There is room to wind around this tree, but if we were to wind around it, the branches are so low that we would have to cut them because it would basically be hitting the pedestrians in the face if they tried to walk through it. So, we just recommend to remove this tree.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It's a great myrtle.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yes.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yeah, and...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Those move very, very easy. They grow by cutting.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's also -- it's got a very poor structure, so it's one of the things that is probably better to replace it than to relocate it. But it's a small tree, it's not really consequential.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: This is the one tree...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: That's not a specimen tree in the project limit.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, no, I didn't even consider it.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Okay, so tree number eight. Tree number eight is another specimen black olive tree. It's a very tricky location for the sidewalk because we do have a fence and a column that are right there. So, a six-foot sidewalk at this location would be a 30 percent impact, and if we were to narrow down to five, it would be 27 percent. So, we're recommending removal for this one because it's over the 25 percent that's in the City Code.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

City Manager Rojas: You said remove?

Public Works Director Diaz: Remove.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's if this plan is followed.

Public Works Director Diaz: Of course, yes.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: When I went out and looked at it, this is one of the better-looking trees.

Commissioner Castro: I think the original arborist report had an issue with the roots of number eight against the road, right?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: The what?

Commissioner Castro: The original arborist report had an issue with the roots when it was against the road?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Well, so we went out with the arborist again, we were showing them the roots and everything, and you know, when we originally asked them to, you know, produce the arborist report, we asked them to look at the least -- the path that would be the least impactful. The more that he looks at it, the more that he looks at these tree roots, he has said that, you know, the way that a tree branches out when it has like a barrier is instead of going under, it tends to go like this. So, where there is asphalt and compacted lime rock and sub-base and everything, he believes that the impacts to the tree on the asphalt side would have been probably less. Especially if you're building up six inches from the pavement and when you're on the roadway. So, tree number nine, another specimen tree. This one's in fair condition, but it's just way too close for us. This one would have to go. Not only is it 30 percent impact -- 38 percent impact with a six-foot sidewalk, it falls within that six-foot radius offset of the -- of the tree trunk. So, if you want to see a good example of a black olive tree that has found its way under an asphalt, go look at my driveway. It's a great speed bump.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: So, this is another tricky location, tree number 11. So, this is a specimen black olive. It's in good condition. It's 33 inches in diameter. It has a 36-foot protection zone. A 6-foot sidewalk would impact this location by 43 percent. So, we recommend removal even though it's in good condition. The other thing that has to be noted at this location is that we will have to reroute the driveway approach because right now it's emptying out onto the intersection, so we would have to realign it and potentially harmonize into private property for the sidewalk at this location.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Do you recall how tall this tree is? Because I recall it as being quite an impressive tree.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Off the top of my head, no, but I can definitely give that information afterwards because we do have it listed for each of the trees.

Vice Mayor Anderson: This is, in my recollection, one of the largest ones and one of...

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: The next one.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And one of the healthiest.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: This one was a pretty substantial tree and the one just north of this is also a beautiful tree. So, tree number 12. This one we tried to go around, as you can see, the way that I wound the sidewalk was to avoid that six-foot offset for tree number 12 and tree number 13. This one's in good condition. It's a 40-inch diameter with a 43-foot root protection zone. If we went with a six-foot sidewalk at this location, it would be 26 percent. However, if we narrow it down to five, it would go down to 23 percent, so we would be able to keep -- we would be able to be within the limits of the City Code basically.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm going to ask you a question. When you're talking about these percentages, you're talking about the overall health of the tree, but does it also address the ability of these trees to withstand hurricane force winds and not fall over?

Public Works Director Diaz: No, the percentage relationship of the portion of the root, the root zone that is being cut.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, I understand. But like every other thing that's built, you have to have an anchor.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: If you cut the anchors and it doesn't have sufficient support...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Whether it lives or not is not the issue. Whether it falls down in a hurricane will become the issue.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And so, if you've cut substantial roots, you know, yes, it may fall down alive, but it may not be there because you've now cut its feet.

Public Works Director Diaz: Any of those trees, if there's a hurricane tomorrow, could fall without any impact. Obviously, any root cutting will exacerbate that possibility. We couldn't really tell you what percentage will increase or not.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Our analysis was just based on the limits that we have in the City Code, engineering standards, ADA standards, that's just what we looked at.

Commissioner Fernandez: And that would apply to whichever plan is chosen? Because you're going to be cutting root structure...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: On any side of the tree.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yeah, (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Fernandez: In fact, you probably would lean the tree towards the road instead of towards the residences if the sidewalk's on the inside and the root structure is cut on the inside versus on the side of the street where it could be top-heavy the other way.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, my experience is that the tree -- if the tree were to fall, it would be opposite from where you cut the root.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Any other questions for this slide? So, tree number 14, another specimen black olive tree. This one's in fair condition, 37-inch diameter with a 40-foot root protection zone. If we were to put a 6-foot sidewalk, it would be right at the threshold of



the 25 percent, which is still within the City Code because it's greater than 25 percent, but that's a concern. However, if we narrow it down to 5 feet, it would be 22 percent at this location.

Commissioner Fernandez: Now, this is the one that I had spoken to staff about because of the issue with the driveway and potentially putting this one on the front of tree, but moving the road further over, so that there's a buffer between the sidewalk and the road. And I know I had a conversation with Joe and the Manager about that. So, physically, there's no -- really no way of putting the sidewalk on the inside of this tree because of the drop-off to the driveway. Realistically...

Public Works Director Diaz: This assumes the roots are cut.

Commissioner Fernandez: But even if the roots are cut, the driveway is almost a foot lower than the ground. So, in order to get the sidewalk to the same level as the current driveway, it's an ADA issue, you have a steep drop. So, in this spot in particular, there's really no realistic way of putting it on the inside that doesn't place an enormous burden on the residents with their driveway.

Public Works Director Diaz: There is -- there is an alternative, which I think was one of the options we presented, where you could go back into the road and then you could put a curb on the road.

Commissioner Fernandez: I cannot...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: Physically approve something that has a curb on the road with the amount of traffic on that road. If there is no buffer, I'm a no. So, I -- I can -- I'm okay with moving it to the front...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: But there has to be some sort of buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway. And if we plant a hedge, if we plant something to delineate the sidewalk from the road. But safety wise, I'm a no if we're putting a sidewalk next to the road.

Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner, let me ask you a question. In my neighborhood, where there is more young children and there are more students and there are more elderly individuals than in most neighborhoods, it's fair to say probably 95 percent of neighborhoods in Coral Gables do not even come close to where I live based on the simple fact that you have UM, you have Lennar, St. Augustine Church, you have Riviera Country Club, you have Doctors Hospital, you have a school where kids walk through my neighborhood every single day on 57th Avenue, which is a public school. They walk in front, see them every day. I have a sidewalk with a curb across the street right in front of my house. I live on San Amaro and Urbino, and I see people using the sidewalk

every single day. And in my 14 years of being on that -- on that -- on that street, I have never encountered an issue where, again, somebody's been run over there that I can remember. Has it happened? Maybe, maybe not. But I'd like to understand why it was applied -- and I'm asking the experts. It's not an emotional conversation. Why was it applied there and why can it not be applied in a winding manner in an area, which again, in an effort to try to save the canopy and build consensus, could potentially deliver on everything?

Public Works Director Diaz: The options that we provided to the property owners for them to ballot had two options. One option was a sidewalk along the (INAUDIBLE) on the curb, and there was another option that had that meandering, where you had a curb in some areas, you didn't have a curb in some others. They chose -- they voted for the curbing along the roadway. But yes, a meandering sidewalk with portions with a curb, you know, we can always revisit that, but that was one of the options that we looked at originally.

Mayor Lago: And if I may, I apologize, for the record. This is a two walk -- excuse me, a two-block section of sidewalk.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's two blocks.

Mayor Lago: I don't want to say a number that's incorrect, but if you drive around the University of Miami, how large and how long is that sidewalk that is curbing the entire University of Miami? Would you say three miles? Is it safe to say three miles? Maybe from my home all the way to Ponce, Ponce all the way to Granada, Granada all the way to Doctors Hospital, Doctors Hospital all the way back on Camposano. Three miles, two and a half miles?

Public Works Director Diaz: Maybe.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, you feel comfortable with that?

Public Works Director Diaz: So, a mile...

Mayor Lago: This is...

Public Works Director Diaz: And a half, two miles.

Mayor Lago: How long has that sidewalk been there, would you say? I've been in that house for 14 years. So, how long do you think it's been there, would you say?

Public Works Director Diaz: I have no idea.

Mayor Lago: And that...

Public Works Director Diaz: It's been there for a while.

Mayor Lago: Will you also say that application is something that's used in other places throughout Miami-Dade County?

Public Works Director Diaz: The Green Book...

Mayor Lago: Excuse me, throughout the Gables. I don't want to get into that.

Public Works Director Diaz: The Green Book allows for a sidewalk abutting to a roadway as long as there's a curb.

Mayor Lago: So, it meets the standards.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes, it does.

Mayor Lago: This is -- and I under -- and I respect my colleague's statement about that safety, safety, safety, but if you're using it in an area that has tens of thousands of people walking because they go to school there, and they're all walking, and I see them every single day, I'm going to -- I'm going to be -- you know what, don't take my word for it because there's a lack of trust and faith amongst the colleagues on the Commission. I'm going to take it from the residents who are here. Do you think that you have more people walking on your street or do you think my area, University of Miami, has more people walking every single day? What do you think?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: My area, right?

Commissioner Menendez: But Mayor, doesn't your area...

Mayor Lago: But if I...

Commissioner Menendez: Have roundabouts and traffic circles...

Mayor Lago: But if I...

Commissioner Menendez: To slow down the traffic?

Mayor Lago: But if I may, if I may...

Commissioner Menendez: Just saying.

Mayor Lago: But that's a good point, by the way. And if we finally are able to stop this, they will have a roundabout, and they will have medians, and they will have traffic calming, which is also part of this plan. And it's been pushed back because we want to do it all together on one fell swoop to save money and not have to regrade that street. So, thank you for bringing that up, Commissioner, because you make a good point because that area will have the same amenities, especially in regards -- comes to traffic calming. So, you know, I think we've gone back and forth a lot on this issue. You've heard from the residents, remember residents first, and we've talked about this issue. You have an area which is literally less than a mile away where the same application is in place that has hundreds, if not thousands of people that are walking in this area every single day and using this area and they face the curb on the sidewalk. And I have yet to see an accident in that area. And I welcome Melissa and Hermes, through the Manager, for you to be able to provide crash data if there is any when it comes to my neighborhood because I'd like to understand that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, if you all haven't had the opportunity to look at what the crash data was in the two-block area, you know, I asked the Assistant City Manager Gomez to provide that and there was only one crash in that section and then one on the bridge. And you can provide the detail on that and the report -- and the summary of the report.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, ma'am. There's only -- in the three-year period that we analyzed, there was only one crash in that two-block segment. It was a single vehicle. The driver, according to the police report, was fatigued, ran off the road and hit the tree. I should point out that if the sidewalk had been there with the curb, more than likely that vehicle would have been attenuated. He would have hit the curb and would have gone -- it would have redirected him and probably not hit the tree.

Commissioner Menendez: But does that include folks that veer off the road that don't hit a tree, because there are a lot of people that veer off the road, catch themselves, and then they're back. So, my concern is not so much how many cars have hit trees, but the reality that we live in a world that people are distracted on their phones, or they're tired, or they're trying to get someplace, and they veer off the road, and then they come back. But if somebody's on the edge of the road, they're in danger. That's my issue. It's not how many people hit the tree, it's how many -- the reality is that we live in a society where people are preoccupied, and we've all been in traffic. So, that's my concern. And when I met with residents recently, they talked about -- they mentioned to me a buffer, creating a buffer, which I'm open to listening to, but traffic studies is great, and you know, I'm glad that -- hopefully, the pass -- the driver was well, but people veer off the road. And where the mayor lives, there are traffic circles and roundabouts. It slows traffic down. But even the residents themselves say -- people hate to use the expression -- haul ass on Alhambra. So, we're comparing sort of apples and oranges, and we need to find a solution. And the solution, you know, we have extreme views and data being thrown out, but we live in a reality world. And that's what I want to address.

Mayor Lago: If I may answer to you because you made a comment there that's not true. The apples and orange comment is not true. If the chief of -- Mr. Chief, Mr. Police, Police Chief, may you come up here one second. You were standing up, so I decided to call you.

Police Chief Hudak: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: But you know, we'll -- I promise I'll make it very brief.

Police Chief Hudak: Thank you, I appreciate it.

Mayor Lago: I promise very brief. How many times have I called you or complained to you about the people that -- in the words of Commissioner Menendez -- haul ass down my block?

Police Chief Hudak: This week.

Mayor Lago: So, let me tell you something, just so you get this straight. First off, you don't live on my block. Okay, I will never talk about your block.

Commissioner Fernandez: How intimidating this guy tries to be.

Mayor Lago: Because I don't know about your block. I just don't.

Commissioner Menendez: I mean, I...

Mayor Lago: But let me...

Commissioner Menendez: Your street is a public right-of-way.

Mayor Lago: But let me...

Commissioner Menendez: If you want to block me from that, feel free, but it's a street.

Mayor Lago: No, but I'm not blocking you, but I have a little bit of a more intimate knowledge. I'm not intimidating you; I'm just giving you the facts.

Commissioner Menendez: I just thought you were a fruit expert.

Mayor Lago: No, but you...

Commissioner Fernandez: The way you look at people. The way you look at people.

Mayor Lago: You know, that's life.

Police Chief Hudak: A majority, I would say this...

Mayor Lago: But my point is that...

Police Chief Hudak: For this conversation, is the majority of the accidents that we're seeing, or the increase of the accidents is distracted driving, whether it be -- and there's been a push from the Chiefs Association to do away with, you know, phones and texts and things like that. As the Assistant City Manager said, any kind of a curbing does geometrically kind of push a car back into it or back into play. But most of our single car accidents are people that are distracted. And that's whether it's a curb or -- and if you've seen some of the circles that you're referring to around the university, the 3.2 miles of sidewalk around the university, I happen to know that only because I used to jog it. There is a lot of that damage done to those circles on a regular basis for people that aren't paying attention.

Mayor Lago: So, my point is -- you get to the next point. If you look at, for example, on San Amaro, you look at on Miller, you'll see that a lot of those circles, the signs are down, the landscaping is trampled over, it has to be replaced continuously because people take them. People take them. No matter how many reflectors you put on them or the trees, they're blown, they blow right through them. A lot of the thing, I think a lot of it has to do with the level of intoxication and people coming home late, they can't see or there's an issue. Now, I know my neighborhood like they know their neighborhoods, very, very well. Every single day, I'm outside, my neighbors are talking to me about issues and what they're facing. There is no other neighborhood in my opinion that has that amount of foot traffic because of the amount of entities that are there, like I mentioned to you before. And the activity, if it's not church at eight in the morning, it's church at eight o'clock at night. If it's not Doctors Hospital, it's Riviera Country Club. If it's not Riviera Country Club, it's Lennar. If it's not UM, where kids are coming in and out of class and then you have grad school at night and then you have law school at night and you have medical school at night, it's the constant rotation of people coming in and out. And not to mention the amount of cut-through traffic where people are avoiding 57th Avenue, people are avoiding Miller, and they're trying to find a way around the city. So, a lot of the traffic that comes through -- and one of the issues that we've had there before, and I've told you, and you can elaborate a little bit for my colleagues because they're not in the neighborhood and I don't expect them to know. Just like if you ask me what's going on in Commissioner Menendez's neighborhood, I don't know. I use it now as a cut-through to avoid the traffic that's happening on the street when I have to come through that area, but I barely ever go through that area. So, we have an issue with foreign plates from dignitaries, from consulates, correct?

Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Mayor Lago: I don't want to mention who they are. Well, they all have beautiful race cars, and they use San Amaro as a racecar, and I've had this conversation with you, to the point that they

reach speeds of 70, 80 miles an hour. And we've had issues where the police has chased them down into University of Miami and had con -- right or wrong?

Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Mayor Lago: And we've dealt with these issues. So, and it's always the same culprits and we have very limited ability to do something because of their status. So, I'm of the belief, if my colleagues don't want the curb and the residents want something else, we're at a gridlock, we move on. We leave it the way it is and that's it. And people don't get a curb, and we move on. We live to fight another day. That's it.

Police Chief Hudak: All right. The only -- the second, the biggest area, to your point, Mayor and Commissioners, of pedestrian vehicle interaction is around the Granada Golf Course. That is the two areas...

Mayor Lago: Great point.

Police Chief Hudak: Around campus and around the golf course, which has been -- as long as I've been here, we've had fatalities, you know, and again, putting up a wall is not necessarily...

Commissioner Fernandez: And what did we do with the sidewalk there?

Police Chief Hudak: That's on the outside.

Commissioner Fernandez: We put in a landscape buffer around it.

Police Chief Hudak: The problem is, on that situation, is runners and joggers want to stay on the golf course as opposed to using the sidewalk. And that becomes a much bigger problem for us on the enforcement side.

Commissioner Menendez: Another issue there, because, I mean, driving that area when the sun's going down, is folks are crossing Granada on the crosswalks. But since the lighting is poor, most people can't see the people crossing. So, that's another issue I may bring back for discussion down the road, because with the number of people that are walking, when the sun goes down or it starts to go down, the lighting is so poor that people think that they have the right-of-way. They would have the right-of-way if the drivers can actually see them.

Police Chief Hudak: We actually have a meeting with the Vice Mayor, I believe it's tomorrow, looking for additional traffic-related crosswalks and things from the state and looking for specific high vehicle areas where to help and assist in pedestrian crossing which is just a little bit more noticeable than the signs that we're using now. So, that is...

Commissioner Menendez: Much needed.

Police Chief Hudak: Part of our issue as well.

Commissioner Menendez: Good. Good to hear.

Commissioner Castro: The reason that I put this item on the agenda is because we cannot keep on kicking the can down the curb. We need to come into consensus, hopefully today. We do need sidewalks. As the Mayor said, it's not about moving on. I'm not comfortable just moving on and not doing anything, leaving it as it is. The Commission has committed to Vision Zero, and I think it's time we act with a mind of Vision Zero. I would also like to explore the possibilities of traffic calming because I know that was some of the concerns some of the residents had there, and I don't know what -- maybe we'll have another discussion item, or you could give some recommendations now.

Mayor Lago: Well, you -- Mr. Director, will you advise my colleague what's been in the works for several years now and has actually been approved at the County, and we've been working on this before the previous election?

Public Works Director Diaz: So, there is a traffic component part of this job which, in this particular case, because it's a little, it's on a curve, so that kind of limits our ability to do those things. We're proposing a median as you approach the bridge, kind of creates cars to kind of do something along that. And the idea was to add that before and after the bridge. And that was -- that's a traffic calming element that is being proposed as part of the deal. But obviously, depending on where the sidewalk goes, that design will change. We sent several iterations to the County for the review, but we really needed a resolution as to where is the sidewalk going to be so that we can submit to the County whatever the final design is so they can give us their blessing. And Commissioner, your comment about moving that pavement, it varies, is anywhere between 22 to 24 and change width. If we were to, let's say -- that's wider than what it needs to be.

Commissioner Fernandez: Or shrinking it. Part of it is shrinking the side...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: The width of the pavement.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. So, let's say that rather than taking the pavement away from the west side, you basically shift it to the other side. We haven't looked at that geometry. You will still need a curb because the buffer space that you need when you have a sidewalk next to a travel lane without a curb is a minimum of six feet, and you're never going to get that distance. Now, if we shift the entire alignment further along the east side, it may be the potential to maybe add a couple of feet of grass swale in between the curb and the sidewalk, but we haven't analyzed



that. So, it's something that I couldn't tell you right now whether it's something that's going to work or not. One thing that is going to bring into this equation until now, we only engage the residents on the one side that's going to be affected. We're now going to be impacting driveway approaches. Some of them are decorative on the other side if we go that route.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Trees.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'm sorry?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: And trees.

Public Works Director Diaz: And there's some other trees in that area, so we may need to loop in.

Commissioner Fernandez: The trees there are tiny trees. Remember, we looked into it for the potential of moving...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: The sidewalk to the other side. On the opposite side.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, we will have to look at it closely. That's not something that shifting in that way we've looked at. It's possible, but we don't -- I couldn't tell you right now whether that will work or not. I know we'll have to engage those residents now.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a quick question in terms of a curve.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Because I mentioned last meeting a case in Disney that a car hit, elevated, and it sort of took off. Because you heard the expression, car jumped the curve.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: At what height or what elevation do we minimize, Joe, if you want, if you, you know, chime in, I just want to make sure that -- and there was a lawsuit. Somebody lost their life, hit the curb and the car took off, airborne. So, I just want to make sure that whatever solution is found, that we identify and address all the possible scenarios for safety reasons. I'm just -- you know, it's a reality.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: The height of the curb, six inches, has been set based on years and years of engineering research. That is the height that's best. That car that vaulted over that sidewalk had to have hit it at a pretty good clip in terms of speed and at a certain angle in order to be able to achieve that. Because normally, the six-inch curb does provide that attenuation so if a car is kind of veering off because he's dozing off, it'll bring you back.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: So, that six-inch -- if you go any higher than that, that becomes an obstruction. Now you're introducing a physical hazard on the road.

Commissioner Menendez: I appreciate that and thank you.

Public Works Director Diaz: And just for reference, there are some areas in downtown Miami that have eight-inch curbs. They're ancient and that's not really a standard anymore.

Mayor Lago: So, if you look at other areas, for example, because you said in my neighborhood there's roundabouts. So, if you look at areas, for example, in Camposano, there isn't roundabouts on Camposano. There also -- there isn't also roundabouts on Ponce in that area.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, there's long stretches that don't have roundabouts where the curve is literally right on -- where the sidewalk is literally on the curve. So, it's there. If you'd like, if you'd like, through the Manager's Office, you can provide to the Police Chief, get the documentation, so it comes from a reputable source, and provide the Commission with how many accidents have occurred in my area, in that whole area of University of Miami, and get an understanding of what are the actual reports and send it to us to see whether there's been incidents with bikers, issues with runners, issues -- any interactions with a car in regards to those curbs. If you have them, great.

Public Works Director Diaz: We actually do.

Mayor Lago: You have them? (INAUDIBLE). Go ahead. I'd love to know.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: We actually have them in the presentation if you want to...

Mayor Lago: Okay, perfect. Great.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, while you're working, and I just want to add, at the corner of Alhambra Circle and Sevilla at the southeast corner, we have curbing. The reason we have curbing is there's

not enough distance between the sidewalk and that. Do we have Shield 6 data on the speeds going through this two-block area? And if we do, are the speeds that are being reached fast enough to jump a curb? Because I know from my unfortunate experience being in an automobile accident on a turnpike and the vehicle hit the wall, the, you know, the officer there said, you know, it wouldn't have gone over because it's engineered not to go over. But you really have to be going at extreme speeds sometimes to be going over those walls on a turnpike. And by the same token, there has to be a speed ratio that you would have to reach to get over the curb, the angle you hit it, et cetera, to be able to go over a curb like that. Do you have that data?

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: So, even if we did have shield data from before, and I can't recollect off the top of my head what it would be, we did recently lower the speed limit at this location because, you know, it's not a collector roadway south of Coral Way, so it's 25 miles an hour. The shield data that we would have had would have been back when it was 30. So, we would have to collect it again to get, you know, a more accurate representation of what it is. But I can pretty confidently say that in most locations throughout the city where we have collected shield data, we haven't seen, you know, speeds where you would expect somebody to jump a curb.

Commissioner Castro: We can't keep on kicking the can down the curb. I think we need to come in to -- it's not fair for these residents to keep on with the same subject and nothing to happen.

Commissioner Menendez: So, are we propose...?

Commissioner Castro: What are we thinking?

Commissioner Menendez: What's being proposed is a combination of measures to slow down traffic together with the installment of sidewalks? Is that a package?

Public Works Director Diaz: So, the overall plan will eventually... So, let's just say the decision is made not to move forward any sidewalk, then we will continue to work with the traffic calming element whether we do sidewalk or not. That was something that was actually in the works from before. However, if there's going to be a sidewalk, it makes more sense for us to do it all together. And also, you know, you're looking at pavement. I'm going to redo a pavement, then I'm going to do it again, depending on the option, right? So, for more perspective, we just need direction from the Commission how you want us to proceed. Melissa has a couple of extra slides when they looked at the crash data in this section of the corridor and then also on the San Amaro.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: If you want me to go over the data, I can do it really quick. Basically, I have three different slides. Two of them are for San Amaro, one of them is Alhambra, just to show a comparison between the two. We used a length that, yes, it's beyond the limits of this sidewalk project, but we wanted to capture like a comparative length between the two to be able to show like the crash data. And basically, from within the last three years, from north of Palermo to Sopera, we had a total of eight crashes in that time frame of three years. There

were no pedestrian or bicycle crashes on Alhambra Circle, and there were three injury crashes and zero fatalities. And just for the record, there's an average daily traffic on this length of roadway of about 4,600 vehicles per day. Now, comparing...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: One of the crashes was on the (INAUDIBLE).

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Oh, for this segment, just to refresh. So, if you look - I can't really -- I don't know if you can point. If you can see that green dot just above the water, that's Salvatierra. That was the one that the Assistant City Manager was referring to where the car veered off the road and hit a tree, and then those two blue circles are where they hit the bridge. So, for San Amaro, comparing to, you know, Alhambra Circle, about the same length, where we're looking north of Certosa to basically Ponce, the data showed that there was about 41 crashes within that timeframe, you know, compared to, I think it was eight, you know, on Alhambra Circle. There were two pedestrian and two bicycle crashes. However, these pedestrians were not on the sidewalk. They were actually crossing within the crosswalk. So -- and it was a driveway. There were --- and pedestrians walking through a driveway, they're going to...

Public Works Director Diaz: Somebody walked into a driveway.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yeah, they walked into a driveway. There were seven injury crashes and zero fatalities. The average daily traffic on San Amaro is about...

Mayor Lago: Three times more.

Assistant Public Works Director DeZayas: Yes. Twelve thousand vehicles per day.

Mayor Lago: So, my point was before, like I was telling my colleagues on my left, I have a very distinct understanding of my neighborhood like anybody would because when you walk outside, you see it. You see it in front of you. It's right in front of your face. You see the amount of people walking, baby carriages, people using bikes, scooters, skateboards. There's a lot of activity. And it works. And it works in one form or another. Is it perfect? Far from it. But it works in that area so...

Public Works Director Diaz: From our perspective, we're just looking for direction, however the Commission would like us to proceed.

Mayor Lago: Hermes, do you mind if I speak to the curb and have public comment?

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, first speaker is Nicole Puerto.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Nicole Puerto: Good afternoon. My name is Nicole Puerto and I'm at 3430 Alhambra Circle. Thank you for your time today. The majority of our neighbors are here, and we voted over the summer for an option, an option that worked well for us, that preserved the trees and the canopy in our neighborhood, that was safe, because I doubt your colleagues would propose anything that is not safe for the City of Coral Gables residents. And I just would like that to be upheld. So, thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: Catie Arriola.

Catherine Arriola: Hello, good afternoon. Thank you, guys, for having me, and I appreciate all you do for our city all the time. I'm at 3416 Alhambra, and I just heard about this meeting the other day. I was aware -- the last I heard was we had voted for the one along the curb, and I think, you know, that was great that was sent out to us. I believe it was about a year and a half ago that the Mayor was walking around in our neighborhood and came to our door, and we were actually really looking forward to having a sidewalk. We do think it's needed, and on that same point, I've lived in this house four years, and before that, I was 21 years down in your neighborhood, which was just a little bit south. I was on Certosa, and I agree much, much more traffic in that area. And also, that segment of Alhambra, also from Bird South, needs a curb as well, just on that note, because it's very hard to get around with all those things. But I agree with my neighbors, we want to protect the trees. We all agreed on a plan for the sidewalk, and I hope that that would come to fruition if possible, or if not, the trees, they said they were fair condition. I mean, the ones that are near our house are beautiful, big trees, been here longer probably than the City has been in existence. So, as much as we could protect that, that'd be great. Thanks.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Matilda Kalaveshi.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Matilda Kalaveshi: Matilda Kalaveshi, 3400 Alhambra Circle.

Jessie Pelletier: Jessie Pelletier, her husband, 3400 Alhambra Circle. I'd like to thank the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and all the Commissioners here today. We appreciate your time. We voted unanimously as a neighborhood on the ballot, and we would really like to have this vote respected. Now, I'm going to -- Mr. Rodriguez is going to make some very significant comments as to the

democratic process and what that means for our city, so I'll let him speak there. I'd like to make a different -- or two types of appeals. One would be first to the actual beauty of Alhambra Circle. Has anybody considered this as residents? We believe it is equivalent in beauty to Granada, to Coral Way. It's something that Mr. Merrick would be very proud of. We do not want destruction in the neighborhood. We would like to preserve our trees. I happen to be the -- we happen to be the neighbors impacted who also have to have our driveways rerouted. That's not something that we're very interested in. So, there is an aesthetic appeal that everybody here needs to hear, and we believe we have found that solution. Secondly, one of the issues we have there is, you know, we have a young daughter, and I like her to ride her bike. We are on the corner of Alhambra Circle and Trevino, and I have to teach her, unfortunately, to keep her head up all the time, remain very vigilant if she's going to ride her bike. We can only ride the bike at certain times. I've had to teach her how to ditch a bike if someone's going to come around to -- if traffic is going to come quickly from 57th or from Alhambra Circle. Routinely, we're all -- I'm sure you're all historians in some way, you're all in government. We've heard about a pincer movement known in World War II. This is what we have in our area. We have traffic coming over down Trevino from 57th that moves at very high speed, and you have the same problem in Alhambra Circle. So, from a perspective of first principles, like what are we doing? Why are we even having a discussion about bringing more foot traffic to this area before we have traffic calming measures implemented? So, I'd just like us all to think about that. And the idea might be that you have to do everything at once, but things have very unintended consequences. It's not intended that traffic drives quickly through Alhambra Circle, but it does. And so, whatever measures you have in combination with the sidewalk, calming measures in combination with the sidewalk may not work. They may not work. It's best to calm the traffic first, have a period of reassessment, and then intellectually consider next steps.

Ms. Kalaveshi: And I would also like to add that the location is what it is and that cannot be changed. We are on a street that's a feeder to 57. So, whether there's a sidewalk or not, traffic is going to be present. So, that's why traffic calming is important. Is a sidewalk important? Possibly, but like my husband said, unless we get to the root of traffic calming, unless we get to a solution where cars are more responsible when they're driving, I don't think having a sidewalk is going to matter.

Mr. Pelletier: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Fernandez: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Roland Rodriguez.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Roland Rodriguez: Good afternoon. Thank you again. I've met with all the commissioners. Thank you for your time. Again, I've been up here multiple times, and I think what's frustrating was -- it still hasn't been answered is what happened to our ballots? On May 21st, you all reviewed the ballot that was going to go out. We received it. We voted for it. And then in July or in September -- we vote in July, September Commission, it gets here. All of a sudden, now a mysterious third option is requested. You guys were given all the options. We got the ballots. We submitted them, and then it's all gone. Who's kicking the can down the road? We selected Option 1, and I think that is what we want, and we are very clear on what we want. We're not the ones kicking the can down the road. So, that's my question. What's the validity of our ballots? I think it was very clear. There has been other stuff, collector roads, questioning of whether this is a collector road or not. Well, just to end that discussion, the Federal Functional Classification of Miami-Dade, blown up. Alhambra Circle is a local road, it's not a collector road. And it's -- it's available to everybody through the website. Rhetoric, there has been a lot of rhetoric. I do not know if it's rhetoric, if it's true feelings. In regards to safety, right? And I'm truly sorry, like Mr. Ruano mentioned, yes, there's people get hurt. Yes, I work on roadways all the time. Unfortunately, I deal with fatalities, major fatalities, on interstates. They're not a pretty sight. However, we design on data. We're given data. We design on data, not on feelings. Yes, there's always safety concern, but the data reveals what the safety is and how to design a project. It's a beautiful street. Now you want to remove -- possibly remove eight trees? I mean, now one resident says, oh, we've got to keep Alhambra, the beautiful street that it is, but now we're going to kill seven trees. Arborist reports, I think we can all agree, they're not held to any liability in their opinions. We can get an arborist report that shows what? That it's different than what your arborist says, right? So, are they liable? How liable are we going to hold the arborist? South of the bridge, I think at this point we demand a comprehensive approach to the bridge, to Alhambra. I know Mr. Ruano said, let's go 2.3 miles from the bridge to Douglas. Well, let's go 2.6. Let's go 2.6 from Bird to Douglas. Let's give it a comprehensive approach from Bird Road all the way through because how is he safely going to get to my side of the bridge if he has the same problem I'm having right now? I don't think, and I think it's clear, the design criteria has been met. There's data that shows it that's presented by Public Works. A curb and gutter is a safe manner to approach a design in sidewalks. Just like you have guardrail, you have curb that will deviate a car from going over. It's got to be at a certain speed. This is all historical data that's been going on for years in the Florida Green Book. It's not something new. So, I don't know what direction this is taking. Again, we don't want to kick this down the road. We think we've been very clear, and before we even make a decision, what happened to our ballots? Nobody's -- I've been asking for months, what happened to my ballots? Nobody can answer that. I think like Mrs. Cruz stated multiple times, listen to the people, right? So, how are you listening to the people? We have four residents here that are directly impacted by this sidewalk. Nobody is listening to the people here. I don't think -- I don't know how much further -- I've requested public documents, 1,700 pages of emails involving one resident, very interesting read, if you would get to it. I mean, but I don't have the time to read all of them, but I think he's become a burden to our city, if you ask me. So, I think we're very clear, you have our ballots. And I don't -- again, I don't know what direction this vote is going to take or what this discussion -- because it's slated as a discussion. But if it

doesn't -- if our votes aren't upheld, I think we're prepared to say, no, we don't want the sidewalk. Let's find a more comprehensive approach, which includes south of the bridge, which I guarantee you're going to have similar, if not worse, problems than what you're having right now in my section of the road. You have bigger trees, you have less right-of-way, you have bigger concerns there. So, that's all I have.

Commissioner Castro: So, let me ask you something. What you're saying is if it's not on the curb you prefer no sidewalk?

Mr. Rodriguez: At this time, yeah, we have the option. It's a collector road, and like I stated before, at this time, we don't think our approach is being looked at or considered. Look, we're -- we just bought this home. For us, this is our forever home. We're going to be here for a long time, and we don't want this option just shoved down our throat. We want an option that we agree upon and that is safe, and I think Option 1 is safe. We all think Option 1 is safe. The engineers show you it's safe. The data shows you it's safe. So, let's stop kicking the can down the road and value or validate our ballots. Otherwise, why were the ballots issued? I don't understand.

Commissioner Castro: I understand 100 percent what you're saying about democracy, but sometimes when we feel safety is a concern, that's where the ballots are.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Castro: Okay, in the...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Castro: Yeah, so...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Castro: Right, so Option 3 was requested before the ballots, and it wasn't offered and I'm sorry for that.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Unidentified Speaker: I got it.

Unidentified Speaker: We all decided on (INAUDIBLE). But it's not like we were given three options. We were given two options. We weren't given three options. There was a no sidewalk option, and we said no to that, and we acknowledged that (INAUDIBLE). But now (INAUDIBLE) going back and saying (INAUDIBLE) valid. It was your governing body that issued that vote, not us. We didn't make it up.



Mayor Lago: So, let's do this. Let's do this.

Mr. Rodriguez: One last thing.

Mayor Lago: I want to -- okay.

Mr. Rodriguez: Sorry. Feelings don't design safety. Feelings -- data does.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: Can I ask you a quick question?

Mr. Rodriguez: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Because I think in every walk of life, in business, government, you have to make a decision. But you don't make a decision -- you want to make sure that your final decision, be it a design for a building, design for a road, be it anything, for a school, you want to make sure that that final decision, because there's no going back, is the best decision. It may be a good decision, but like everything else in life, even in parenting, you want to make sure it's the best decision.

Mr. Rodriguez: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: So, I understand the frustration that it's been taking a long time, but if it's been taking a long time, it's because there's an effort to find the best decision. And maybe the best decision is right in front of us, but until everybody at least comes to the conclusion that they can -- that they feel that all alternatives have been reviewed, then that's our goal. Find the best -- and yes, it's safe, but is it the safest? So, we're looking for the safest option.

Mayor Lago: So...

Commissioner Menendez: And that's what we're doing. We're just looking for the best solution.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: Excuse me. But hold on, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: Wait, wait, listen, please, please, please, please, please.

Unidentified Speaker: (INAUDIBLE) people who are directly affected (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Lago: Please, if we can, please, I just want to remain a little bit of order in the meeting here. Look, this is...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: I understand that, and I respect you, trust me, I'm trying to do the best that I can, okay? This has become politicized, okay? This is no longer about sidewalks, it's no longer about where the sidewalk placement is.

Commissioner Menendez: Could you explain yourself, Mayor, what you mean by politicize, please, because if you're addressing us, I find it very offensive.

Mayor Lago: What they would want me to do is they would want me to answer that question. We're not going to answer that question because this is not going to become the circus that they want it to become. What I'm telling you is this has become...

Commissioner Fernandez: I move for a recess.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Fernandez: There's a motion and a second. Under Robert's Rules (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Lago: No, no, no, no.

Commissioner Fernandez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: You need to vote. You need to vote.

Commissioner Fernandez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: Yes, you do.

Commissioner Castro: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, Commissioner, Commissioner, you need a vote.

Commissioner Fernandez: (INAUDIBLE) you don't understand Robert's Rules (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: Excuse me, excuse me.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: You need a vote. So, the one that doesn't understand Robert's Rules is you. So, listen to me.

Commissioner Fernandez: We're taking a vote?

Commissioner Castro: Let's be mindful and respectful, please.

Mayor Lago: No, no, no, no, no.

Commissioner Castro: Let's be respectful.

Mayor Lago: We are going to take a step outside. I'm going to ask you please step outside. We're going to walk into my office. We're going to have a five-minute meeting. We're going to come back, okay. This has become politicized because we don't face what has to happen here. We have to make a tough decision. Not everybody's going to be happy. I started this process three or four years ago in an effort to connect two blocks of a sidewalk to a bridge. And then hopefully, and then hope...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: And we talked about it, and then we -- and then the whole point was that in the future, to hopefully, to hopefully be able to then address the other south section of Alhambra, which went all the way to Bird Road, in a slow process to address sidewalks, just like we're doing in Blue Road, okay. So, my point is -- my point is simple. I'm trying to deliver this for the community. The options are, we either cut the trees down, which the residents don't want, we meander around the project and find a location for the sidewalks, which is not going to make everybody happy, or we discuss the issue of the curbs. When the answers of safety have not suited certain narratives, they've been attacked. Staff -- and I want -- I have to stick up for staff and for Hermes and for Melissa. Staff would never, ever, ever bring anything forward that would jeopardize the safety of the residents, okay? So, come to my office, we're going to have a conversation, and at the end of the day, this is something like I've told you before, we may just have to move on without sidewalks because it's become not about the sidewalk location, it's about going against something that was implemented a few years ago. So, if you'd like, I'm going to take a five-minute recess. We'll come back and we can have a conversation, okay? Thank you very much.

[Later...]

Mayor Lago: All right, so we had a little break. And I'd like for the resident on Alhambra, he'd like to provide a few words in regards to an option and some other documentation that he has on behalf of the residents.

Mr. Rodriguez: So, again, on behalf of the residents, we had reviewed Option 1, the balloted version that was sent out in July. We've been clear and that's what we want. I think everything has shown that it's a safe alternative. If you notice, I never -- I stopped it at that point. And I think we wanted to see where this is going. What's the final decision on it? Because it's going to affect the rest of my life in my home. And so, it's very important to me, and that's why I've been here devoting my time to this. So, we didn't have it, but now, again, I don't know which direction the Commission is going with this, but if Option 1 is not selected, which is our option, this is what we're ready to present. This is our resident petition against sidewalk implementation due to governance issues and ballot acknowledgement failure. To the City Commission of Coral Gables, we, the undersigned residents impacted by the Alhambra Circle project, formally petition against the proposal to install sidewalks in our community. This decision raises serious concerns, particularly given the unresolved issues surrounding governance and transparency. Disregard of the July 2024 ballots. Many residents actively participated in the ballot submission process regarding this issue in July 2024. However, there has been no formal acknowledgment or transparency about the outcome of these ballots. This lack of acknowledgment undermines the democratic process and raises doubts about the validity of the decision-making process. Safety. City Commission chose to ignore a unanimous ballot citing safety concerns. There has been no verified justification for these claims other than unsubstantiated rhetoric. Safety data provided by Public Works along Alhambra Circle and San Amaro for the past three years shows no data that would raise safety concerns. Our balloted option meets all required safety and design parameters allowed by Florida engineering standards. Lack of accountability. There has been a consistent lack of accountability, communication and accountability from the Commission regarding the proposed sidewalk project. Key questions raised by us concerning project oversight and long-term maintenance plans have either been inadequately addressed or completely ignored. Moreover, under -- undue influence has been given to a single Coral Gables resident who would not be directly impacted by the project. The installation of sidewalks while beneficial in some communities and cannot be justified without clear governance and proper consideration for existing conditions, proper engineering judgment, residents' votes and opinions. Until these issues are addressed, we firmly oppose any further movement on this project. We demand immediate action to rectify the failure to acknowledge the July 2024 ballots and ask for a full and transparent review of the entire process. Additionally, we demand a full comprehensive approach and sidewalk design along Alhambra Circle from Bird Road to San Rafael Avenue. After -- only after such steps are taken should any further discussion about sidewalk implementation proceed. Respectfully signed the residents of -- along Coral Gables -- along Alhambra Circle in Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Based upon your comments and the extensive discussion from the residents in that area, it's incumbent upon this Commission to move forward and honor the ballots of the residents. It's a safe design. I move for Option 1 to be implemented.

Mayor Lago: I'll second it.

City Clerk Urquia: Before moving forward, Mr. Mayor, I still have additional members of the public who have requested to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I'm sitting here and I am still trying to figure out how we jump from Alhambra sidewalks to San Amaro sidewalks. But since San Amaro was mentioned and since I have lived in my house since 1976, that's 48 years, and two of my daughters were born while we were living there, and my parents, who lived with me at the time, used to take them around, I can talk. I haven't lived there 12 years, or 13, or 15, 48 years as of July 22nd, this past July. If you live on Miller like I do, you can take the baby carriage, you can take the wheelchairs, you can take the kids walking, you can take the mopeds, the bicycles, et cetera, et cetera, from Red Road all the way to Ancona. And then, we don't have a sidewalk. We have to go across the street to use the sidewalk that the university built, because from Ancona to Urbino and another block, I forget what the other street is, there's no sidewalks. So, when we talk about sidewalks in front of my house, yes, in front of my house, I have a sidewalk, I have a swale, I have a curb. In front of the church, there's a sidewalk, there's a swale, there's parking. But from Ancona to Urbino, there's no sidewalk, okay? So, you would have to cross San Amaro -- and I'm glad that some of you mentioned how fast the kids drive around there. You would have to cross San Amaro to get on the other side. But the interesting thing that caught my attention was that we mentioned -- we meaning the mayor -- we mentioned that there are sidewalks on that side, and there's no issues. Of course not. The span of sidewalk that he was talking about is wider than the normal sidewalks. That's why there's no swale there. But if you turn -- that's the -- if you turn into Camposano, the sidewalks are skinnier, and then there's a swale. Okay, the street, the sidewalks across from Mr. Lago, Mayor Lago, do not -- there's no issue that the sidewalk is next to the street because it's so wide that you can put two baby carriages at the same time, okay? So, why would I walk next to the street if I have a span next to me that I don't have to be next to the street? So, that argument was not valid, okay? Comparing San Amaro to Alhambra is comparing, I guess, Miller to US-1. There's absolutely no comparison. And if you go south in San Amaro, the university does have sidewalks, and they have parking. Okay, doesn't compare to people walking on the street either. And when we talk about Doctors, there's no sidewalks around Doctors. So, people do not walk around Doctors. There's no sidewalks on Camposano. So, on the other side of Camposano, other than the university side, there's no sidewalks there, okay? So,

this business of people walking in our neighborhood, because it happens to be my neighborhood too, I've only lived there for 48 years, okay? And three kids grew up there, and I have two granddaughters, and I have one granddaughter that goes to the Richter Library, and she has to cross the street. Okay, so I can talk about that area. The comparison doesn't relate to you. Ignore it.

Mayor Lago: So, let me answer the question because what Maria Cruz stated there was beyond false on every single front. Look, number one, what she's stating is -- I'm going to put my record -- my phone -- my address on the record, 5200 San Amaro Drive, okay. She's stating that I have -- in front of my house, I'm missing a sidewalk. Mr. Manager?

City Manager Rojas: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: Sorry to interrupt you, I apologize.

City Manager Rojas: You didn't, go ahead.

Mayor Lago: So, please, I would love to have a sidewalk in front of my house. I've been asking for years. You can put it in the front one, okay, thank you. So, that's number one. Number two, what I would love to see is sidewalks run all the way down San Amaro. But whether it's in front of my property or across from the property, at the end of the day, it's still going to be used. And I actually prefer to have the sidewalk in front of my house. You want to know why, so that when I open my door, I don't have people on top of my door because they're using -- they're going from driveway to driveway, especially people with baby carriages and people who are coming to the neighborhood to work. I've had to open the door in the morning, five in the morning, and I have people who are, instead of walking on the grass, they walk on my driveway, which is perfectly fine. I understand that. I've even had people standing in my driveway in an effort to get out of the rain. So, the simple thing is I'd love to see a sidewalk in front of my property. We should all have sidewalks. I think it's great. And I also recommend that we have sidewalks from Alhambra to Blue Road. And unlike, unlike -- no, we do not. We do not have sidewalks, for example, where my father-in-law lived until he passed away two years ago from a very tragic disease that when I would walk him around the corners, when I would walk him around the neighborhood, I would have to go onto the street in Alhambra and then go to the nearest street over so we can get out of the immense amount of traffic that was in Alhambra. You cannot go -- you cannot go from Bird Road to the Blue Road open space because there is no sidewalks there. There should be sidewalks. But what you see there is an attempt, an intimidation attempt to say, well, the mayor doesn't have sidewalks in front of his house. I do, I have sidewalks on Urbino. I'm just missing a small sliver in front. And I would love to have a sidewalk in front of my house. So, I welcome it. I welcome my -- the -- our -- my Public Works team here to, if they can put a sidewalk in front of my house, I welcome it. It'd be great, great for the community as a whole. So, sir?

City Clerk Urquia: We're not done yet.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

City Clerk Urquia: We have additional speakers.

Mayor Lago: I know.

Mr. Rodriguez: I'm sorry to interrupt.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker...

Mr. Rodriguez: I just -- what I know we have (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: You give that to -- give that to the Clerk.

Mr. Rodriguez: I don't know what to do with it.

Mayor Lago: Give it to the Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you, sir. So, next speaker, Mr. Mayor, is going to be on Zoom. Going with Robert Ruano.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Ruano.

Robert Ruano: Good afternoon.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Mr. Ruano: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. So, a lot of stuff going on, a lot of stuff to address. But first I'd like to ask the Clerk, please, since I'm not there and I'm sorry that I can't be there with you today. Mr. Clerk, please, if I am rebutted, because I often am when I speak, can you please allow me to answer? Because my name has been mentioned several times and the Mayor may rebut some of the things I have to say. First of all, before I speak, I would like to answer that there was a question about public records request. And I would like to -- because there was a -- last time I spoke in person, there was a public records request on a document that I handed Commissioner Castro. And I'll be sharing it with the Commission later today, but it's very simple. I'll read it to you. It's an email, June 4, 2020, from Vince Lago to Chelsea Granell, Ed Santamaria, Peter Iglesias, Miriam Ramos, copying J.C. Diaz-Padron, Ariel Fernandez, and Maria Cruz. And it says, "Chelsea, please place a discussion item, 'curbing in the neighborhood,' it's on the July Commission. Please advise any of my colleagues would like to co-sponsor. Best regards, Vince Lago." And I just mentioned that obviously because I saw that there was a public records request, and I am not going to opine on the Mayor's motivation, but I will just tell you that that's what happened. And I feel really bad because some neighbors are against me and feel that I am maybe

against them or their ability to live and love Coral Gables like I do. But it is right. This process has been politicized, and I'm afraid I politicized it. And I did this actually in December of 2021, when I had a conversation with the Mayor and I asked him to please, please restart this project that we've been talking about since 2014, the sidewalks in 2019 and 2020. Please restart this project two blocks away from my home. And he met me out there with the Public Works director, I believe Melissa DeZayas. And one of the first things the Mayor said, oh, if they don't want the sidewalk in front of the house, we'll tell them, we'll put it against the road. And I remember telling him, Mayor, what are you doing? Like, first of all, a sidewalk is a sidewalk. Everybody starts from the point of a sidewalk goes against the property line, behind the trees, and then they move from there. In every instance in the City, that's what they do. Some examples, people say, I've heard Le Jeune or Biltmore Way, where the sidewalk is against the street with a curve. Wow. Yes, they are also against the property line because those roads were expanded. So, I'm sorry I politicized it, but let's get back to the reality and the facts at hand. I'd like to first -- I'd like to thank the staff for developing a sidewalk plan for Alhambra that makes sense. Also, I'd like to thank this Commission for voting unanimously, 5 to 5, to develop a sidewalk plan with sidewalks against the property line, where the Public Works Director has stated would be the safest place for a sidewalk. The Administration will tell you today that this safest option will be to the demise of the most trees on this section of the options. Currently, seven trees with a modified option. The reality is that with a little creativity, Option 3 would only have to remove two trees already designated by the City hired arborist to be removed. Other trees could be saved with the redesign of a small section against the road in front of a particular tree. Sorry, (INAUDIBLE). Others could be saved by ramping or the use of other materials in areas where roots might impede a sidewalk. Finally, the City's plan envisions at the narrowest, a five-foot sidewalk, though they could go to three feet in small sections, again, confirmed by Public Works. Keep in mind that City's own plans call for replacing the black olives in this section with native trees. A lot of residents ask for them to be removed because of their droppings. Regardless, these trees provide a wonderful canopy, oxygen, and energy savings to name just a few. With a revised Option 3, the City could remove two failing trees and could plant an additional four trees in those and other sections, a net of four trees. A few neighbors on the other hand will tell you that the best option is a new curb with a sidewalk against the road. They will tell you that this is the best option because they were asked to vote and that this is what they want. That because they voted to change the character of this historic road, of a road with thousands of residents, mind you, with the least safe and most expensive of three options of sidewalks that will connect 2.3 miles of sidewalk, then the City should listen to them. I'm sorry, but I disagree. It is my opinion, and just mine, but also informed by best practices, studies, and standards. It is my opinion that you should tell the Administration to build the sidewalk you told them to build last time, with minor modifications to save trees, with the understanding that a sidewalk belongs against the property line, and every effort should be made to put them there. Thank you and have a good day.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, for the record, Mr. Ruano had five minutes total to speak. He was not interrupted. Moving on.



City Clerk Urquia: That's it. Oh, I'm sorry. Jackson "Rip" Holmes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Holmes.

Jackson Holmes: Greetings. I know it's -- I'm sticking my neck out because if you get someone who's talking too much at some point, you want to like tell them, would you cool your jets? But I've heard from the people who are on Alhambra Circle, and by and large, they've said that their first priority is to get the traffic calming, that that's the most urgent need. And I know there are countervailing things about if we do it all at once, we save money or this or that. I personally am really aghast at the idea of putting a sidewalk where children would walk literally next to traffic. I mean, why don't we all commit suicide? I apologize for that. What I'm urging consideration of is what I get the consensus of this group is to just move forward with the traffic calming now, which is the most important issue for safety, and then the other items can fall into place later. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right. As the sponsor, what is the will?

Commissioner Castro: I think there's a motion and there's a second on the table.

Mayor Lago: Will you reiterate your motion?

Commissioner Castro: That wasn't my motion.

Commissioner Fernandez: No, it's yours.

Commissioner Castro: It was Anderson.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I move to move forward with Option 1. These residents have spoken. Our traffic engineers have spoken. The curbing is a safe option. You know, the engineering shows that the speed that would have to be reached for someone to jump this curb -- and Ms. DeZayas, if you could assist us with this -- would be in excess of what we normally see in our city, including on this street. It is a safe option. To take out 75-year-old trees, which none of us sitting here today will be able to see something replaced like that that's healthy and risk these trees falling over by chopping anchoring roots, I don't think is an appropriate option. We have an obligation, the City has an obligation, to provide accessibility throughout our city. Cities throughout South Florida have been sued for lacking accessibility, including failure to provide a safe route over a bridge. In this area, it's totally lacking it. This is an important step to be able to provide a route for an individual with a disability to get across the pedestrian bridge. Right now, there's none. It's much

more dangerous now. At the same time, the traffic calming can be installed. It can be engineered to work with the curbing. The curbing will help keep the cars -- redirect the cars away from the pedestrians and onto the bridge. I have a home with a traffic circle and curbing, and no one, since that curbing has been put in, has jumped the curbing. I'm one block from Le Jeune. I've seen a number of times in which all the traffic from Le Jeune has been redirected onto my street. And despite that, no one has jumped it. Without the curbing, they have. But with the curbing, they have not. So, yes, that's the motion. Move forward.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a question for staff. When was the last time a study was done in terms of the speed by which cars drive down that area?

Public Works Director Diaz: I believe it's probably been several years.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: And probably predates back when the speed limit was 30 miles per hour. So, we can work with the police department to put some of the shield and gather some of the data. Something that's up to date.

Commissioner Menendez: Because everybody's in agreement that not only the flow -- the speeding has been an issue. It's an issue to the whole city, we all know that. But since we're addressing that portion of the Alhambra Circle, I think it's important for the City to also quantify the numbers, particularly for that area.

Public Works Director Diaz: (INAUDIBLE).

City Manager Rojas: My understanding -- excuse me, my understanding is that a decision has to be made as to where the sidewalk's going to go before we can take a look at doing the dividers, correct, for speed reduction.

Public Works Director Diaz: The data we can collect at any moment. The decision -- yes, we would like to make a decision, or the decision would be no sidewalk at all, and we could still move forward with traffic calming.

Mayor Lago: We can do that. All right, so we have a motion and a second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm going to just add to that for you all since I'm one block off Le Jeune and I frequently walk my dogs all the way up to Le Jeune and back, the speed at which cars come off the Le Jeune Road is sometimes 45 miles an hour. No one's jumped the curb.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so we have a motion and a second. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Vice Mayor Anderson?

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Castro?

Commissioner Castro: Yeah, I want to put on the record and clear the air that it's not about listening to one specific resident, and there's not one resident to me that is more important than the other. You guys are all the same. And as for me, this is definitely not political. It's about safety and when I say safety is because we've been addressed with recent deaths and injuries that have impacted our community and I think maybe it's a little PTSD and that's why we implemented the Vision Zero. I would be happy if maybe you could provide me an option like with a little bit of a buffer. But as for my vote, that would be a no.

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Fernandez?

Commissioner Fernandez: As I stated before, I cannot support the sidewalk on the curb unless there's some sort of buffer, so I'm a no.

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Menendez?

Commissioner Menendez: I promised the residents I want to find a solution when we met in my office, and I still stand by that. My points are I just want to make sure that, before any sidewalks are installed, that traffic calming is installed, not sidewalks and then three years later traffic calming. We talked about a buffer in the break. During the break, I think a buffer is a must because even in the areas near the Youth Center, there's sidewalks but there's a swale. That's a buffer. And the other thing, I think the staff mentioned the two trees that are not, I guess, in the best of conditions to see if we can -- if the trees are going to be removed because they're not healthy, to see if that could help in terms of creating buffers as well. So, until those three points, we have a comprehensive plan to do the three things I mentioned, I'll vote no, but I'm open to vote yes if we can come up with a plan that has traffic calming, a buffer, and a good use of the land wherever the two trees are.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, let me rephrase the motion, because I'd assume traffic calming would be put in, okay? And we talked about taking out the sickly tree near the bridge on a prior occasion, and I suggested that. And there's another sickly one that is under canopy that is in poor condition. So, that's two small trees, okay, that are in poor condition.

Commissioner Menendez: Right. I need...

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Commissioner Menendez: I need staff to come up with a plan for a buffer. Like I said, it's a three-pronged approach. We get to the three, I'm ready to move forward. But we need a buffer and (INAUDIBLE) until I hear that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The buffer of some plants, if a car is going over there, which I can tell you statistically from my corner, they have not. And if you're not going over it, a block from Le Jeune with people pulling around the corner the way they do, because you know the Le Jeune traffic is 50-55 miles per hour, so it's naturally going 45. A few blades of grass aren't going to make a difference, okay?

Mayor Lago: So...

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I guess the safest thing is just stay in the house.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: Mayor Lago?

Mayor Lago: All right, so to the residents, it's been a three-year odyssey plus. I'm in favor of the project to deliver sidewalks to your community, whether it's behind the trees, in front of the trees, the idea is to finally connect some sidewalks. I'm in favor of doing this project. We should move forward. We're also going to do traffic calming, which I think is going to be critically important. We're not setting a precedent. This exists in multiple different locations throughout the city without a buffer. And as you can see, and I asked the director and the assistant director through the Manager to please provide my colleagues and make it a public record the documents which show the amount of cars driving through both neighborhoods, both neighborhoods, so you can see how there's significantly reduced amount of accidents or incidents in regards to pedestrians and bicyclists. I think it's important.

(Vote: 2-3)

Mayor Lago: The motion fails. We move on. Can we go on to the next item?

Commissioner Menendez: I'd like to address the residents that are here. And I ask the Manager if you all can meet with the residents to find a solution for a buffer, a creation of a buffer, and if you're able to find a way to do a buffer, I'll bring back the item. But I need -- that's it. It's not a politicizing anything. I just want to see if we can find a buffer so we can all find that solution that we're trying to get to. That's all, that's my position. If that's okay with the Manager, they can work towards -- and I'll be more than happy to bring it back.

City Manager Rojas: We'll look at traffic calming, the buffer, and the tree removal.

Commissioner Fernandez: I would also like to make a motion directing staff to begin working on a comprehensive plan on connecting our sidewalks from the bridge all the way to Bird Road.

City Manager Rojas: (INAUDIBLE) Bird Road?

Mayor Lago: I love it.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Great idea (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Anderson: That is a great idea and absolutely needs to be done.

Mayor Lago: Let's do it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We have a sidewalk there on the north side of Bird Road. We need to be able to connect to it. And hopefully soon, we'll have one on the south side of Bird Road. And God willing, if we get the grant for the sidewalks on the south side of Alhambra Circle, we can continue to connect all the way to the university and the Underline and get these kids to school safe. Be able to get the high school kids all the way over to the high school safe. But yes, this anticipated that we would have traffic calming done simultaneously, sooner rather than later.

Mayor Lago: To the residents, thank you very much for being here. I appreciate you.

Mr. Rodriguez: Can I make one last comment?

Mayor Lago: Of course, yes.

Mr. Rodriguez: The issue of the ballot still remains unanswered. Either way, we want an answer. I mean, we deserve it.

Mayor Lago: Well, the ballots -- the ballots were clear.

Mr. Rodriguez: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Obviously, the residents wanted a certain design.

Mr. Rodriguez: ((INAUDIBLE)).

Mayor Lago: The City is not moving forward with that. There is not support on the Commission to move forward with that design. So, there is nothing we can do about it.

Mr. Rodriguez: All right.

Commissioner Menendez: And I'll give you my position on that. The ballots were sent out and I know at least one of my colleagues asked for a particular third option be included in the ballot. But at that time, the Administration decided to send out the ballots not including that commissioner's third option. And if that third option would have been there, this discussion probably would have been had months ago. But the Administration at that time left it out. And again, we wanted to have all the options on the table.

Mayor Lago: Let me clarify the commissioner. First off, no commissioner on this dais asked for anything to be left out, number one. Number two, number two, you have a signed document that you provided as a public record saying that all the residents here are in opposition of the third -- of the third option. It's not like even if it had been included six months ago, you still wouldn't have voted in favor. Would you have voted in favor of it? Would you have voted in favor of it? Would you have voted in favor of it? Would you have voted in favor of it? So, you don't have the votes. So, we can hide behind whatever thing we want to say. At the end of the day, it is what it is. It was two options that were submitted. The residents chose one. There's no will on this Commission to move forward on that issue, and we'll see what else we can deliver. Maybe we can put together a buffer, and we can find a way to deliver on the sidewalks. At the end of the day, I just want to find a compromise between the residents and this Commission to deliver -- to deliver something that is more palatable for people who want to walk and enjoy the neighborhood. Okay, that's it. It's pretty simple.

Commissioner Castro: Let me go ahead and correct you because I think that you have a hard time understanding some things sometimes. I was the one who requested a third option. The third option should have been on the ballot. It was delivered to the residents with only two options. Just (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: But no one on this Commission -- and I don't have a difficult understanding. I can hear you very well. I'm having a little -- I'm having...

Commissioner Castro: Hearing and understanding are two different things.

Mayor Lago: But wait...

Mr. Rodriguez: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, I'm not even going to dwell on that comment because it's like the level of disrespect on that comment is ridiculous. So, my point is -- my point is...

Commissioner Fernandez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: I -- I -- the facts are simple. The facts are simple. We're moving forward. There's no votes. There's no -- there's no interest in moving forward with the will of the residents here. As you say, residents first. The residents came here, and they said exactly what they wanted. We did not give the residents what they wanted.

Commissioner Fernandez: And we have to think about the safety of all residents. That has to be our priority.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Diaz.

Commissioner Fernandez: The priority of every government is to provide the safety of their residents. This is not the safest plan.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Diaz.

Commissioner Fernandez: Our staff has told us.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Diaz.

Commissioner Fernandez: Director, is this the safest option, Option 1?

Public Works Director Diaz: Option 1 is a safe option. Option...

Commissioner Fernandez: Is it the safest option?

Public Works Director Diaz: In the back will be safer.

Commissioner Fernandez: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Hold on a minute. But if it's...

Commissioner Fernandez: That was my question.

Mayor Lago: No, wait, wait, wait. Wait, wait, stop for a second, please, please. Does one meet standards, engineering standards?

Public Works Director Diaz: They both will meet engineering standards.

Mayor Lago: They both will meet standards, right? Is one...

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: A safe option?

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so there has to be compromise, that's the problem. That's the problem, there has to be compromise to be able to deliver on certain things. Case in point, when you look at projects that have happened in the past here when we voted on certain things, I haven't always been happy about certain things we voted in the past. Case in point, I'll give you an example. I wasn't happy that Miracle Mile was given an additional floor, and we were able to do so. But I still said it's better than what was being proposed of nine stories. That to me was egregious, but it happened and that's a new code for Miracle Mile. So, it's safe, it meets engineering standards, and again, it's not a precedent here in the city.

Commissioner Menendez: And I offered a compromise, and hopefully, staff can...

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll work on that.

Commissioner Menendez: Work with our residents. And by the way, in the 1950s, cars were safe. They met standards. Fast forward 67 years, they're safer. They were standards, but there's always an effort to try to improve upon those standards and that's what we're trying to do. So, thank you.

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll work on that option.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Fernandez: Cars didn't have seatbelts, they didn't have airbags, and we've been adding safety features and requiring them for years. The fact that something has been done a particular way for 99 years doesn't mean it's the right way to do it.

Mayor Lago: At the end of the day, it's perfectly fine. We evolve. There's better standards today than there was before, but you can't -- but you can't say that one thing is not safe when it is. Okay, moving on.