

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-1
June 13, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
Deputy City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Robert Ruano

Agenda Item I-1 [0:00:00 a.m.]
Update on the Bicycle Master Plan.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next item, Bicycle Master Plan.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And, I'll ask the Public Works Department to come forward. You all wanted, at this Commission meeting, an update on the Bicycle Master Plan, and we're prepared to give that.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: There's the presentation. That's a picture of our founder there with his bike. I thought it was appropriate for this presentation. For a little history, in 2012, we were awarded a grant to develop the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. And two years later, the City adopted that plan. Two years after that, we awarded a design contract for components of the plan. We awarded it Toole Design. Here's a diagram of the bicycle routes that will be implemented in the next two to three years. Those are the heavy lines. The dashed lines are the proposed network. And the yellow solid line is the existing built network. The proposed bicycle network that will be developed in the next two to three years connects the University of Miami, Coral Gables Youth Center, neighborhood parks, Coral Gables High School, downtown and the larger, broader regional trails, with 34 miles total proposed for the City of Coral Gables. And, our consultant is evaluating 13 miles and designing 7 miles. We also have two miles that will be built on Alhambra Circle that we want to grant to design and implement, and that was the Transportation Alternatives Program. One of the things I want to communicate to the Commission is why we need to make sure that we implement the Bicycle Master Plan. It provides better mobility. And, even if you're someone who will never ride a bike, this is a good plan for you, because it reduces congestion and provides options for people to not have to drive. We also want bicyclists -- people who ride bikes to remain separated from automobiles. It's better for people who walk because, again, we're reducing congestion and reducing emissions. It's good for people who use transit because they have the ability to use their bikes to get safely to their transit stops. And of course, it's safer for the bicyclists. We also need it because, as you've heard Commissioner Lago say earlier today, that we have about 700 trips on our street each day. We only have 50,000 people who live here. So, this is something that benefits people in -- that live in our city and people who are traveling to and through our city. Last month, we started counting -- well, actually, annually, we count bicycle and pedestrians at various locations throughout the City. The weather has held us up a little bit, but

at the location of Miracle Mile and Salzedo Street -- while Miracle Mile is under construction, we had a 21 percent increase in bike ridership and a 3 percent increase in pedestrians. It's better for the economy. A healthy population is better for our economy. I wanted to mention that in San Francisco, two-thirds of the merchants surveyed on the new Valencia Street said that bike lanes have improved their business. North Carolina's Outer Banks, bicycle tourism has generated \$60 million in annual economic activity on its \$6.7 million bicycle infrastructure investment. Building bike infrastructure creates more jobs than roadway projects create. In Indianapolis, on their Cultural Trail, the value of properties within one block of that high-quality -- and I'm saying high-quality bicycle infrastructure, those property values have increased 148%. On the Atlanta BeltLine, REMAX has claimed that homes near the BeltLine and other city cycling infrastructure used to stay on the market for 60 to 90 days and are selling within 24 hours now. It's better for the environment. I'm glad I get to come behind Maggie, if she's still here. She was talking about the active design and we were talking about the Paris Accord today. But, providing bicycling as an option is better for the environment. We did a lot to encourage solar energy programs. We're also buying electric vehicles. But, when it comes to on-ground policy decisions, we often ignore a very simple way to eliminate carbon emissions at the source, and that's through transportation. There, you need to see my graph. Transportation is accounted for 45 percent of emissions in Florida in 2007, and 35% of that is from cars. Here in Coral Gables, transportation accounted for 31% of emissions in 2013. And, we did some calculations similar to what California did last week when they were trying to determine how they could reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. In the state of California, each person would have to choose to take two trips per week that was not in a car by themselves. That means they could walk, they could bike. They could take transit. They could ride with someone else. Here, in the City of Coral Gables, we've determined that we would have to reduce 56,000 trips per week, and that's about - - that's a little bit more than one trip per week, if you chose to not drive a car by yourself. And so, again, I go back to providing options. That's what we need to do. We want to create a unique bike network that enhances Coral Gables by making users feel like they are riding through a park. We want it to be very relaxing and low stress. We had a challenge. Initially, when we adopted the Bicycle Master Plan, we had estimates that told us that it would cost

\$354,000 -- about \$354,000 to build those bike lanes on Riviera Drive. We had a third-party estimate come in -- third-party consultant come in, developed an estimate. It was over \$800,000 for bicycle lanes. But, we also identified that it would be about a half-a-million dollars for a shared use path, which is a high-quality bicycle infrastructure. So, I want to give you a little lesson on what the different bicycle options are. And, I wanted to take these from the roadway view because I'm going through a lot of this and giving you some background because I have a concern that once we go to implement the bike plan, we're going to get a lot of pushback from residents because they have a concern related to aesthetics. This right here, you're looking at a street that has a shared use path on it, and you probably don't see it, but that's Old Cutler Road. You cannot see the shared use path from the roadway. Ideally, we want to build infrastructure that is good for a 7 year old and a 70 year old. And, this is my shameless picture of my son riding on a shared use path. I have no problems with my son riding on a shared use path. This particular picture was taken on Sombrero Beach. Again, this particular path, very little signage and no striping. This right here, I wanted to tell a little story about. This is separated bike lane. It's separated by parked cars and flexible posts. This particular separated bike lane is from my old neighborhood in Baltimore City, that is currently being pulled out, because residents did not think it was attractive. This is absolutely not anything that we want to do in the City of Coral Gables. And, I want to assure you that we want to have beautiful bicycle infrastructure. This is a picture of a prettier separated bike lane. This is a bike lane. This is not necessarily high-quality bicycle infrastructure. This is not something that a 7 year old or a 70 year old would be riding their bike on. This is an example of a bicycle boulevard. A bicycle boulevard can be constructed in many different ways. But in this particular case, we have speed cushions, which are designed to allow emergency vehicles to drive through, and also for bicyclists to drive through. The speed cushions slow down the automobile traffic.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can you go back to that?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I sure can, yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: Tell me how that differs from the shared road. Is that just for bicycles...?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Okay, so...

Vice Mayor Keon: Or is it for both?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: No. It's for people who ride bikes and people who drive cars. And, the difference is that on a shared road or sharrow, which is this next picture right here, this is Anastasia Avenue. I was riding my bike one Sunday morning behind this family. Their daughter looked to be about my son's age, 7, and they had an older boy, about 10, and the dad was riding on the outside. The difference is that there are not speed cushions on that roadway to slow motorized traffic.

Vice Mayor Keon: I see.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: The speed cushions do slow the motorized traffic, allowing for a safer ride. The use of sharrows, I do not recommend at all. The League of American Bicyclists will not be recommending them. These are -- we did this back in the old days...

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE)

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: About ten years ago. That's just the pavement marking that has a bicycle painted on the road.

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh, in the middle of the lane?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: That says bikes may use full lane.

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh, okay. Well, is it that or is it the one that has the (INAUDIBLE)...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: That's a bike lane.

Vice Mayor Keon: That's a bike lane, but it's like just in the regular...

Commissioner Lago: What's this?

Vice Mayor Keon: Lane of traffic...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Next one.

Commissioner Lago: Next one, excuse me.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes. It's on Anastasia Avenue. I'm sorry it's not a very good picture.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes, it's on here. But, you can't see the sharrow. But, it's just a bicycle...

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE)...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: It's a bicycle painted on the road and there's a sign that says bikes may take full lane.

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh, okay. Alright.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: So, our implementation strategy has been -- well, we awarded Toole Design the design contract to design approximately seven miles of bicycle infrastructure in January 2017. Every opportunity we have, we apply for grant funding, like the Transportation Alternatives Program, which we won in 2015. We designed smaller projects in-house, like Sevilla Avenue. And, we fund facilities through development mitigation, working with developers. If there is a developer that is working -- doing -- has a project on a street that is nearby or on a street that has planned bicycle infrastructure, we work through the agreements with the developers to fund those improvements. Okay, so the accomplishments to date. We constructed a half-mile of bike lanes on Sevilla Avenue in 2016. We installed two miles of shared roadway on Anastasia Avenue. We've developed our website, the Get Back on Your Bike Program, where we reintroduce bike riding to adults over 50. We have implemented bicycle parking at special events. We have the free bike racks for businesses, where businesses can reach out to us and we will provide and install a bike rack for free. We have in-house plan review, where we make sure that all the developers are providing for the bicycle infrastructure that I mentioned before. We have certified staff for bike rodeos and safety. The police have -- they conduct bike safety awareness campaigns. And of course, we had the award of the Transportation Alternatives Program.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Have you -- Thank you very much. And...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Oh, wait. I have one more.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh. No, it said questions.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: One more. It's the most important slide, what is next. There we go. I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh. It said questions.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Okay, I'm sorry. I'm going too fast. So, this summer, I'm very excited to be working with our consultant and Bike Walk Coral Gables to develop a demonstration project. We are going to have a separated bike lane on Salzedo Street, right outside of the police department, and also, on University Drive this summer. Gables Bike Tour, August 20, to experience those facilities. We recently met -- and I don't want to overstate this -- with residents on Castile Avenue, who were interested in having a bicycle boulevard on their street. We have to have meetings afterwards. The first meeting, I guess we were not really sure where we were, if we had a lot of support or a little support, but we will have subsequent meetings for that. We'll have public meetings in the fall for the projects that we're designing that cover Salzedo Street, University Drive, Aragon Avenue, Segovia Street, Riviera Drive. Pisano Avenue will be reconstructed to incorporate bike infrastructure by the end of this calendar year. We expect to complete the design of the seven miles by August 2018, and then we will bid that out for construction. And, one of the things I wanted to say is that, you know, I provided a two- to three-year outlook for what we're doing, but that's not it. We're not finished. The two to three years will get us about ten years of bicycle infrastructure, but we have many more that we have to do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. And I have a question. Have you thought or has Coral Gables thought of bike rentals?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes. You're talking about bike share.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm talking about bike share, bike rentals...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes. Miami-Dade County is -- they need to take their contract to the Commission for approval. As far as I know, that has not gone yet. I asked for an update today. But, their bike share are electric assist. And I thought that would be ideal...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Are what?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Electric assist. So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's not fair. That's not...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: It's not as much work. But, I thought that would be ideal for the City of Coral Gables. It's also a good opportunity because, you know, Miami-Dade obviously covers such a large area; to be able to share with them would be good for us.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: Are you -- sorry, did you...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no. Go ahead. I have -- there's a person that wants to speak.

Commissioner Mena: I just had a quick question on your presentation. You showed various photos of the different options, if you will. I know that in South Beach they recently started a bike lane -- equivalent to what you showed as a bike lane, a single small path, if you will, the size of a sidewalk, but they put in white plastic...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Or whatever they're made of, poles.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes, flexible posts.

Commissioner Mena: On West Avenue. Is that an option? Is that something we're integrating anywhere?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: As a policy matter, in Public Works, we do not install flexible posts. They're not attractive and they're also very hard to maintain. It's been our goal to make sure that the infrastructure that we develop is safe, functional and beautiful.

Commissioner Mena: So, as far as the bike lanes that they -- the bike lanes that you'd be looking to implement, it would be more akin to what you showed us with some sort of like hedge in between?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes, or they would be separated paths. They would have some sort of landscape buffer. The highest quality bike infrastructure is separated from traffic. And, that is ideally where we would like to be, as much separated bicycle infrastructure as possible.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: And, then the second question I had was you mentioned this program we have or -- where we install bicycle racks for free if a commercial building or...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Somebody requests it. Is that something that we also, you know, try to negotiate in terms of when somebody comes in for an approval that...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Always.

Commissioner Mena: We require it of them?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Always.

Commissioner Mena: Okay, good.

Commissioner Lago: And, it's part of the LEED -- it's part of the LEED -- one of the LEED points that you can get, which is now any building over 20,000 square feet has to have a LEED component, so it's pretty much standard issue.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: And, not only do we ask for it on the right-of-way, but we also ask for it inside of their parking garages, so that...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: There's adequate parking inside as well.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, thank you. We have Robert Ruano, who wants to speak, and then I'll call you back. Good morning.

Robert Ruano: Hi. Good afternoon.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good afternoon.

Mr. Ruano: Commissioners and Mayor. Congratulations, Commissioner Mena. Thank you all. Well, I guess, Robert Ruano, 1544 Mercy Avenue. I'm also a founder of Bike Walk Coral Gables. We work very closely with Jessica. I want to applaud her on what she's done and the City has done. But, I wanted to speak for two reasons. First, because our group, after a certain

article, which misrepresented the bike plan, came out, I think that people should set the record straight. And secondly, I think it's important to speak, because I think there's more that can be done, and I think this Commission is the one to do it. First, I'll say that the bike plan was developed with planners, Stantec and Street Plans Collaborative. They did it back in 2013, adopted unanimously by this board. I would urge you all -- and I came up here specifically, because I know we have two -- a Commissioner and a new Mayor -- to look at the bike plan. Look at the things that were picked in the bike plan, the specific streets, the routes, because they weren't done in a vacuum. They were done with a lot of community input; a lot of us that spent a lot of time doing -- a lot of people that spent their time and a lot of professionals who spent their time doing this. The main goal of the bike plan is not for the cyclists that you see on a Saturday morning in their Lycra going down, you know, 30 miles per hour. It is for the families. It is for commuters, service people that may work downtown. So, keep an eye on particularly, the downtown, which is a focus for us, and it should be a focus for you. And then, finally, I'd like to say that in terms of what can be done more, there's things that staff can do and the administration can do. And as some of you know, when you push things and push things, things get done and things get done a little faster. Well, we have done some things. The City has done some things. I think more can be done. I think there's implementation -- smaller bits of implementation can be done. I don't know if you know, but for example, on University and Bird Road, if a cyclist sits there at that light, he could sit there all day. He or she could sit there all day, because nothing is triggering that light to change unless a car comes up there, okay. Those are little things that can be done with a button. There is areas where to just cross Le Jeune on Aragon, sometimes the light takes 90 seconds to go through. And so, what happens is, you know, cyclists and/or drivers -- because as somebody said, and I mentioned the other day, is that cyclists aren't breaking the laws. There's people breaking the laws. And, those people typically break the laws if they're a cyclist or if they're a driver, okay. And, those times -- and those long times, people are apt to take the light, to break the law. So, there are a lot of little things that we can do and the Commission can do by pushing the staff, looking at what is in the bike plan, looking at how much money is there, because unfortunately -- I mean, one of the things a little bit more that I would have like to have heard is how much money is in there, how much has been

spent. I know we put a lot of money towards this, but I want to make sure that the money is well spent, that there's a connected bike path in the City. And then finally, to say, you know, the sharrows, I agree with Jessica and a lot of people do. The sharrows aren't the safest thing, so I hope you will avoid them and look at separated paths. So, thank you very much...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Ruano: For your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ruano: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next item.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can I just -- one thing -- I have -- you know, on Edgewater, you have those pile-ons those plastic pile-ons right as you come off of (INAUDIBLE)...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes. I don't believe the City did that.

Vice Mayor Keon: The City did that. Who did that?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I think that's a County -- but, if it was installed, it was installed before I was here.

Vice Mayor Keon: Do you know who did that, Peter or Ed?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: I don't know, Commissioner. But, we try to -- the norm is to not go with delineators. They tend to be ugly and they tend to be...

Vice Mayor Keon: They are really ugly and half of -- and some of them are broken off and they look terrible.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yeah. That's exactly why we don't want to do that.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can we either remove them or fix them or do something? It's right as you are going -- as you exit Ingraham Park on Edgewater going east.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: And, Vice Mayor...

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE)

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We try to minimize those. Those are a huge maintenance problem.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Because cars knock them down all the time, so...

Vice Mayor Keon: They are, so just take them out.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We try to minimize delineators.

Vice Mayor Keon: I mean maybe you could put actually a hedge in there or something. I mean, maybe there's a way you can deal with -- because there is, you know, the bike lane around that comes from Old Cutler over the bridge and then down around the park, and then it ends up in the street. But, I think it's that little transition from, you know, a dedicated space to no space...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Right.

Vice Mayor Keon: So, you know, maybe there's a way -- if you look at it, there's a way you could probably design something that could protect people on bikes and not have it as unattractive as it is.

Commissioner Lago: Quick question.

Vice Mayor Keon: Just take a look at it.

Commissioner Lago: Jessica, if I may, I've gotten a few phone calls in reference to the bike lanes that were installed next to St. Theresa.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Is there something in the works for that, or is that staying...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: It's under construction now.

Commissioner Lago: Okay.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: We -- I know that there was a concern that the cars were queued up, but we have lengthened the queue lane. And I'd have to check, but we've had a lot of issues with rain, trying to get that construction finished, but it is under construction now.

Commissioner Lago: Okay, thank you. Right, I saw the construction going on. I just wanted to kind of give...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, Jessica.

Commissioner Lago: The residents an update.