

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-7
July 11, 2023
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 Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz
Transportation Division Manager, Melissa DeZayas

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-7 [3:36 p.m.]

Update on traffic calming along Mendoza Avenue
(Sponsored by Commissioner Fernandez)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto F-7.

Commissioner Fernandez: Following the Sunshine meeting that we had on Mendoza, I arranged a meeting for Commissioner Cabrera’s office to come out to discuss the questions that remain regarding the county’s involvement in traffic calming on the street and the repaving of the street, and I’ll yield the floor to the director who was there.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good afternoon. Billy, if you could bring up the slide. There you go. I’m going to let Melissa take over.

Transportation Division Manager: Good afternoon, Melissa DeZayas, Transportation Division Manager. So, we’ve reached out to the county because as you know, speed limit signs are under their purview on this street because since it’s a border street they are 30 miles per hour. As of a

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few weeks ago, they installed the signs on Mendoza, and regarding the stop controls that were requested, they installed them on Hernando, those were completed. We are still pending for Segovia, Casilla and Costado, those they haven't given us any indication on if they've completed the study yet. Regarding the traffic calming – So, the speed cushion on the 400 Block have been completed. We did get the data collected for the 500, 600, and 700 Blocks, all of the blocks qualified. So, what we're doing now is, we reached out to our consultant. They are going to start working on the design concepts. These are the concepts that we send out when we ballot, and based on our conversations with them, they'll have those ready within the next few weeks. So, in August we'll be ready to go. We'll ballot, that's a 30-day process, so we'll probably get all the ballots back by September and depending on what we get back from the residents, if they decide that they want to move forward with the traffic calming we'll do final design and construction.

Public Works Director Diaz: The direction that we need from the Commission is something that we're going to go ahead and move forward as soon as we're ready to go, or if its going to go to the back of the line. As I've mentioned before, we're in year two of a five-year program. If the position is that we just do this whenever its available, that's basically...

Mayor Lago: My advice, my advice, but hey, what do I know, because I remember last time that we were here, we had people screaming at us, because certain streets were jumping the line supposedly.

Public Works Director Diaz: The Transportation Advisory Board has been pretty adamant about that as well.

Mayor Lago: Again, important, I would first off wait for the information to come back in regard to the traffic study, but there's an existing traffic study that has five phases that says things are done in phases, correct.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Mayor Lago: And they are funded accordingly.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, I'm not a proponent of skipping areas for one reason or another. It puts us in a position where we were accused of doing that a while back ago on Alhambra right before Bird Road and we received a lot of heartache as a result of that, even though that area was enthralled in a county issue with a no left turn and county signs were removed and there was a back-and-forth issue there, we moved forward. I think it's a great idea, Mendoza, we've addressed this issue before, you and I, this is not new to the Commission, but we need to do the traffic calming, we need to do the study and find out what's going on and I'm not in favor, not in favor, I want to be

very clear, skipping anybody whose been waiting. Let's do things the right way, because at the end of the day, it puts us in a bad position.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I just have some comments, because I know from personal experience. There are residents that requested studies and for whatever reason the data was not inputted, and the areas weren't studied. Correct me if I'm wrong Commissioner Fernandez, this is one of those areas.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That the request was made by the residents, but it was passed up because of data entry error essentially. Happened a few blocks from me, happened on my street and staff said, well no one ever asked for it. Well, I know from personal experience.

Mayor Lago: Was this area in the original traffic study that we did.

Public Works Director Diaz: It wasn't part of the maps that went to the community meetings and Commissioner Anderson brought to our attention that I think at some point maybe yourself or somebody else who.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I was there.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I marked the streets. I personally marked the streets on the map that needed to be studied and they were not put in the study. So, when a resident tells me that they had requested it, and I know from my own personal experience it happened in my areas as well, it's consistent.

Commissioner Fernandez: And there's another factor to consider which is the repavement. I know we talked to Commissioner Cabrera's office, and they said that it would probably be better for the city to repave and then reimbursed for their half, so that's something else to factor in. That street is in major need of repaving.

Public Works Director Diaz: There's some areas that are in bad shape and that's something that we need to work with the county a little closer, especially the block around...

Commissioner Fernandez: Just around the area...correct.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Commissioner Fernandez: There's literally a trench there.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

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Mayor Lago: Can you do me a favor Mr. Clerk, Mr. Director. Will you send my colleagues on the Commission the report, the Traffic Master Plan Report which details all the areas that were studied and one through five and when that's going to be accomplished.

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll be more than happy to share the information that we have. Unfortunately, if somebody put a request and somehow, we didn't capture it, I don't really have a way at this moment to really...

Mayor Lago: I want them to have the information, so they understand what are the worst areas, the most impacted areas in the study we've done to the least. I think it's important.

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll share all that with the Commission.

Mayor Lago: Because again, residents are going to ask you, was my area studied, yes it was. You can look or it wasn't studied. My understanding was that we reviewed the entire city, correct.

Public Works Director Diaz: We didn't review the city. This was resident driven from the beginning. The process that was set up was for people to send us requests and then we went ahead, and we did it. It's perfectly feasible, some areas that we got requests, some maybe didn't make it into the list. We had a list with some requests that go back to like 2014, even before that.

Ms. DeZayas: Even before that.

Mayor Lago: We had a meeting the other day, we worked together on a street. We had residents that were opposing traffic calming on their street. You have people who move in, people who leave, people who say yes, they sign off on a covenant and later they don't want it, one thing or another. We're seeing that happen. I had a meeting yesterday with the City Attorney with a resident, discussing a matter, and I can't talk about it here, because it will be becoming before the Commission, but they recently purchased a property and there have been a covenant signed on that property and they are not happy with what is being proposed. So, people leave, people buy, sell. So, I understand that things change. Give us the study. Send it to the Commission, let everybody see what came out of that report.

Vice Mayor Anderson: One last note. We are following up on the amendment of the MOU to be able to get one of those items included in there is a smaller speed table so that it can fit more centered on the lot and not interfere with driveways. That may resolve some of the issues that we're having right now with certain residents.

Mayor Lago: Anything else for the good of the order on this issue?

Public Works Director Diaz: No, nothing else.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. We'll move onto F-9.

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