

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-2
July 9, 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 Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Budget Director, Paula Rodriguez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-2 [4:57 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager to identify funding for installation of temporary speed tables at all locations pending traffic calming improvements. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: F-2 is simple. We've had multiple meetings with residents. Everybody here is getting calls about the fact that there are 30, 40, 50 potentially even 60 locations, correct, that are defined to receive speed tables. People are frustrated. They want their infrastructure now. I know that we're approving more subcontractors to commence work.

Public Works Director Diaz: Well, that's the plan for later this year, yes.

Mayor Lago: My point is that this is an opportunity here to address all these issues, but I want to be clear, I've already gotten phone calls from people. If you give it to one street, you've got to

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Installation of temporary speed tables*

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give it to them all. At least the ones that have met the criteria. If you have not met the criteria and you have not received the approval, you are not going to get traffic calming that is temporary. If you have received the approval and you are a year away, two years away, I don't want to just give it to one person and then everybody else is clamoring, why did that person get it. And then they have to wait 3, 4, 5 months until permanent traffic calming comes in and then they remove that temporary and they put it in that neighborhood. I think it's fair. If we're going to do it for one neighborhood that's waiting a year, by the way, that's my neighborhood. I don't get traffic calming for the next year in my neighborhood. I've been waiting five years for it since we implemented this project. So, I think it's the appropriate thing to do. I don't think it has to be politicized. I just want to move on with it.

Commissioner Fernandez: Can we move up the balloting for those that have already met the qualifications to be able to...

Public Works Director Diaz: The thing about the balloting, usually what goes with the balloting is the design.

Mayor Lago: That's not the issue. The issue is not the balloting. The issue is the design and also the fact that we have a limited amount of funding per year, and you can't attack 50, 60 things at once. This is just about getting temporary traffic calming and putting it in places, so you alleviate people's concerns who have been waiting four or five years. They can have this temporary traffic calming for a year, for example my neighborhood and then when the permanent infrastructure comes in, it's no longer an issue. You take that temporary and you relocate it to another area.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I think we're in agreement. I'm not trying to be antagonistic. I'm trying to move up the balloting process with just a preliminary design to make sure you don't put in temporary infrastructure there and then the residents don't want it.

Mayor Lago: No Commissioner, that's not the issue.

Public Works Director Diaz: We have right now eight speed tables that have been balloted and have been ready to go, weather permitting it takes about a week and-a-half to two weeks per table to be constructed. The additional, close to 50, they are pending, there is no preliminary design done and we probably won't have the preliminary design done for most of them until probably the latter half of this year, and maybe into early next year. In fact, I believe the consultants because our contract expired, the pool of consultants that are going to be doing the design, I believe they are in one of the upcoming pending Commission items.

Mayor Lago: May I add something to that, just to put it on the record. We had an item that we budgeted for a year and-a-half ago, two years ago, which was the line item for traffic calming. That line item is no longer realistic, because how much is that line item?

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Public Works Director Diaz: Well, I think the original was \$1.4 million, that was budgeted in a year, two years.

Mayor Lago: How much do you think it's gone up in one year?

Public Works Director Diaz: You know it's hard to tell.

Mayor Lago: Design and construction.

Public Works Director Diaz: Well, the design, we know they went up significantly. The one thing that we don't know, and I think I mentioned this in a prior meeting is that we've had some of these traffic circles that have been rejected but significant savings for now. Some of them now, at least one is coming back, one alternative, so it's kind of like right now we have about 50 new speed tables that we have on request. So, I don't know where that tradeoff is going to end up, you know.

Mayor Lago: While we're saving money on those traffic circles, that's not real, because you have the other 50 that are desperately in need of it. So literally that money is going to be immediately gobbled up by the other areas that want it. So, what I'm talking about is, this is what I do for a living. Construction is up through the roof; concrete continues to go up; all these speed tables are made of concrete. The design and the engineering have gone up. The reason why I bring that up is because if you have an allocated budget of \$1.4 million dollars, correct, and then you're telling me, I'm just making sure Melissa gives me the yes that I'm correct. So, once you have that \$1.4 million and then you gobble up more this year because your design has gone up and you gobble up a little bit more, because concrete has gone up, rebar has gone up, labor has gone up. You are no longer as effective as you were before. So, what ends up happening is, this project, and you're not saying this, I'm saying this, and you can educate the Manager and the Commission on this. The project was supposed to last five years. It's not going to last five years, because what we budgeted five years ago to do all these sections and all these areas, the cost of construction has skyrocketed along with design. So, we have less money to deliver on our goals and more people are asking for traffic calming.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right now, we have about 50 locations we're collecting data for. We don't know how many of those will qualify; and one of the things that we've seen is that as we build them, there are some abutting streets where maybe we didn't get a request to begin with. Now they say hey, include us too. So yes, the list continues to grow.

Mayor Lago: We've been dealing with that on a few emails in the last two weeks, we met with the gentleman. So, my point is, if we're going to give it to one person, everybody else is going to start screaming that, I have to wait another year and-a-half for my traffic calming, because I'm waiting in the queue and it's not coming because there is only so much band width, there's only so much of a budget. So as the year comes to an end, and we exhaust that budget, we've got to wait till the

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following year, the following year to start installing the traffic calming which is permanent. So this is a solution that buys us time with individuals, at least a year and-a-half or a year and we give it to everybody, and as we start installing permanent, we can get rid of the temporary and install it in areas in the city that maybe at the end of the day they say, we don't want it, but at least they got to try it.

Commissioner Castro: I don't think that we need 60 of them. After talking to staff, I think the appropriate number would probably be 30. Everybody is not going to qualify at the same time, these are temporary, after one comes off, because the permanent ones coming then we can go ahead and use it for the other residents. Stage 1 is the ask. Stage 2 is the accumulation of data. Stage 3 is qualifying, and Stage 4 is vote of the residents. We could go ahead and do it between Stage 3 and Stage 4, or I suggest better after Stage 4, because the residents want it. You are not going to put it before and then the resident don't want it. It's really a waste of money and time.

Mayor Lago: You know what makes me happy, that you agree with me, and that's what I told you.

Commissioner Castro: The only thing is, I don't think we need to invest on 60. I think it's a waste of money.

Mayor Lago: I never said 60.

Commissioner Castro: So, what did you say?

Mayor Lago: I said, how many do we have now?

Public Works Director Diaz: Right now, we have about 56 pending in total.

Mayor Lago: Already ready to go. Can we sign off on it.

Public Works Director Diaz: No. We only have eight that are ready to go.

Mayor Lago: After those eight, how many do we have?

Public Works Director Diaz: Forty-eight.

Mayor Lago: Are we going to install them today?

Public Works Director Diaz: We have eight that are ready to be installed.

Mayor Lago: Not permanent. If we could do it right now, how many can we do that are temporary?

Public Works Director Diaz: Temporary because they are smaller.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

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Public Works Director Diaz: You know, we could get our measuring tape and put them on the street.

Mayor Lago: Just like we did on Biltmore Drive.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, we can actually go ahead with measuring tape and figure out where we put them. There is no guarantee though that when you design the full one with the concrete and the larger that most likely they are going to go in the same place, but it's not a full guarantee because sometimes you have drivers in the way. So usually, this is why we usually have a preliminary design before we put to ballot, so that people have an understanding. Sometimes we get folks who don't want them in front of their property. More often than not they get overruled by the block as-a-whole, but we will be putting the temporary probably towards the middle of the block where it makes sense when the full design is done. They also in some instances there may be some drainage considerations as well, which the temporary won't cost, right, because they are a little bit smaller footprint, it doesn't cost as much disruption to the existing issue. So, you know it's something that we could get with a measuring tape and go ahead and install, but when we go for the concrete one, we still need to do a preliminary design.

Commissioner Fernandez: I guess the question is how many would you be able to – If we were to say, this is the money, how many can you literally put up right now?

Public Works Director Diaz: I have...

Commissioner Castro: That the residents have voted.

Public Works Director Diaz: The only ones that have voted are the eight.

Commissioner Castro: What stage are we that we can say we're ready to put it?

Public Works Director Diaz: The only ones that we have balloted for the eight that are being scheduled for construction. So, we have right now one of the pending items; we're going to get new consultants on board, they are going to have to do the preliminary design, then we go to ballot. So, we expect a lot of those to be done some time between the end of this year and early next year, and then they'll be ready.

Commissioner Castro: Give me a number. Give me a number. How many?

Mayor Lago: The only reason why he has eight is because he only has the bandwidth to do eight. So, he's gone out there and gotten those balloted and these are the next eight that we're going to do. If you go and you get, let's say 30, I don't care how many it is, 30, 40, whatever the number is. How about this, whatever makes you happy. I just want to get them done. Hold on one second.

I bring it up. I bring it up and the intent is to change the legislation. I don't care. You want 30. How about we do this. I'll do 31 ½.

Commissioner Castro: It's okay.

Mayor Lago: Let me give you, my point. My point is this, if tomorrow you can go out and ballot 31 people, 31 homeowners and say, are you interested in traffic calming. We're going to give you temporary while you wait a year or two years for the permanent to come, as we catch up. You're going to start seeing people say yes, I want it. Of course I want to try. I want to alleviate it. Everybody here is getting phone calls about traffic. I want to alleviate my neighborhood. I want to see traffic slow down. And we tell everybody the same thing, we're never going to stop people from coming into your neighborhood. We're a cut-through city. There is no other choice, but the whole point is to slow traffic down. So, the issue here is simple. If you go out there and you speak with the 60 homes that are left and you say, hey, would you like traffic calming. I would love to see the number, maybe 80 percent, 90 percent would say, yes, give me the temporary right now, and then we install it. If we get the 31, or 32, or 28 installed, then we move onto the next batch, that's a good problem to have, then we have to buy 10 more, or 15 more, or 20 more. I just want to start the process of alleviating the traffic calming.

Commissioner Fernandez: Would you be willing to just instruct staff to come back to us at the August meeting with a number of temporary funding and the number that we could put in.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, just to clarify. We can come up with a plan to put as many temporary as the Commission will direct us to, right. It's only a matter of figuring out the funding, which I think has already been discussed internally.

Mayor Lago: So, the Manager has the funding. Let's put it.

Public Works Director Diaz: Now, those locations that we're putting this, most of them will not be balloted, right. So, the question to the Commission, would you like us to send them some kind of ballot ahead of time, or how would you like us to go about that?

Commissioner Fernandez: Would you be able to?

Public Works Director Diaz: We can. Obviously, the time stretches a little bit, but it's a matter of – we'll do something a little simple and review the general circle of where the speed tables will be temporary. We could do whatever the Commission directs us to, depending on how many would you tell us it will take a little longer. It will definitely be a little shorter than waiting for the concrete ones to be constructed.

Commissioner Castro: I would feel more comfortable with...

Public Works Director Diaz: And the question we will have to the Commission is, how many would you like us to proceed with.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor, go ahead.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, we're going back and forth a number of times. We will be having an option coming to us from the county and I know our traffic engineer in the back of the room and thank you for being here. I know you've been under the weather, has been working on trying to get a smaller speed table approval from the county. So, these temporary speed tables can help serve two purposes. Send out the balloting, say temporary speed table, and it will give us time to get approval from some of the smaller speed tables that can go more appropriately in the middle of the block. Some blocks like Almeria, if you noticed in the 400 Block its kind of close to LeJeune, but its more appropriate there, because that's where the speeders are coming from. But in some of the blocks its in an odd spot. It's almost where you're stopping, it's like why even bother having a speed table here, because it's too little too late, by the time you get there. So, ballot for a temporary speed table while awaiting final design and approval and final balloting.

Public Works Director Diaz: And construction for the larger – right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And while you're at it, add a line in there, please note, we cannot construct when its raining. I know that's obvious, but I've had that question from certain individuals' multiple times on that 400 Block on Almeria, they don't understand that we can't pore cement when it's raining.

Public Works Director Diaz: Its not safe for the guys either.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It's not safe either.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll second that.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor: The intent was always to ballot. The intent was to get approval. You don't install...

Vice Mayor Anderson: True.

Mayor Lago: You don't install these items. I'm just saying to my colleagues on the Commission that they seem that they may be confused about, our intent was we are going to go and install these tomorrow all 60 of them, or 50 of them, or 40, or 30, or 28, or 29, whatever the number is. That was never the intent. The intent was to be proactive and get out there and address the speeding issues in the neighborhood. You're not getting me on that. That's not the point. That's an

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afterthought. That's an afterthought. The intent is, you're not going to install something in somebody's neighborhood, and they wake up in the morning and be like, I didn't approve that. I didn't want that. So, my point is that that's an afterthought. I just want to move forward with build consensus. The Commission has an arbitrary number of 30, even though we have a need of 60, let's move on with the 30. I don't have a problem. Its not hurting me. It's the people who want the traffic calming who call every single one of us and say, I want it today. I'll even do it even better. If staff, through the Manager's office, says, we did the 30, it's been gangbusters and we got another 30 that was offered, listen, bring it to the next Commission meeting, and say, we need another 30, and we're going to ballot another 30, if you give us the approval for the funding. I'm flexible and willing to work with anybody, but this is safety and I'm asking to let's not go back and forth and kick the can on the curb another two months, to the August 27th meeting. Let's deal with this traffic calming issue now and let's get them working on it. In two months, what can you do in two months? Can you start the balloting process?

Public Works Director Diaz: In two months, yes, we can probably have the ballots sent out.

Mayor Lago: We can do that. That's a big step forward. We can order – let's say we order 15 of them.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. And that's a question we'd like your direction to tell us how many you are going to buy, and then in order to expedite the process, we'll also be asking you to authorize the Manager to sign off on a bid waiver.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right. Is there a price point that we can leave it to staff's direction here, if it's 15 or 16, so we can start getting this ball moving forward.

City Manager Rojas: Vice Mayor, I think that the 30 temporary speed tables are probably the right number, maybe a couple more than we need. You never know when you have difficulty installing, damaging while installation. That's going to run, our calculation is about \$165,000.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

City Manager Rojas: I've identified, actually our budget office has identified the funding out of the Mobility Impact Fees that are unassigned. Right now, that's a balance of \$400,000, so we have enough. So, what we need is this authorization to procure the funding.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll second.

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City Manager Rojas: And a bid waiver.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: I'm happy everybody is on board. Let's go.

Commissioner Fernandez: Let's do it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Let's rock and roll.

Budget Director Rodriguez: Can we make sure that any resolution that you pass now amends the current budget for that hundred and so thousand and appropriates the funds to be used for that expense, and then also as Hermes mentioned, in order to procure it, he'll need authorization within that item to allow the Manager to sign a bid waiver.

Mayor Lago: Give me one second. What you just said right now, Mr. Clerk, please include her language into the resolution.

Budget Director Rodriguez: So, we'd amend the budget to recognize Mobility Impact Fees to fund the hundred or so thousand that you mentioned.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So moved.

Mayor Lago: And Madam City Attorney, did you have something you wanted to say.

City Attorney Suarez: Just regarding the bid waiver, this would require a bid waiver. It always requires Commission approval because of the amount.

Mayor Lago: I understand. I understand. So, we have a motion and a second. Is there any public comment here?

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Perfect.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

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Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)