

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-3
May 21, 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

Transportation Division Manager, Melissa DeZayas

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-3 [2:06 p.m.]

Update on the Coral Way and Granada Boulevard Traffic Signal Project

Mayor Lago: H-3. Good afternoon, H-3.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Melissa DeZayas, Transportation Division Manager. We actually have a presentation for this. So, this is just an update that we have for a project on Coral Way and Granada. This project has been designed; it's gone to the Historic Preservation Board who gave us some comments. We addressed their comments and now we're going to be starting construction soon. The history of the project is, it's a Signal Hardening Project. So, what's existing right now is a traffic signal string pole. You have two string poles; they are made out of concrete. We are going to be changing them to steel; the location is going to be the same. We are going to be adding crosswalks, ped signals, supplemental traffic signals, drainage improvements and some landscaping. This is what it looks like now.

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Public Works Director Diaz: So, if I may give a little bit of back history. This project got generated – the county, if you notice that intersection, basically one of few areas you have the lights hanging by a wire. That does not meet current hurricane standards. So, the county came to us and said, we’re going to put a mast arms at that location. And we said no. So, we started working, keeping in mind its Coral Way, it’s a county road. So, we started working with the county, we found an alternative, we actually got a grant to fund this project. So now it went from being a county project to being a city project. So what Melissa is presenting is the best alternative to what the county was being proposed and just imagine the horror of having four huge mast arms at that intersection.

Mayor Lago: How long has the city been working on this project?

Transportation Manager DeZayas: I’d say at least two to three years.

Public Works Director Diaz: It predates Melissa being here. That’s when the county came to us. Originally, I believed Ed Santamaria was around and Jessica Keller.

Mayor Lago: I just wanted to put it into context for how long.

Public Works Director Diaz: That’s how far back that goes, when the county came to us, and I probably just started working here. I remember being horrified, like no, no, you can’t do that here. So that’s how far that goes.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: And there were a couple of iterations. It wasn’t just the mast arm. There was another configuration that they wanted, four string poles instead of the two that are right there, and it was going to give like a box of traffic signals hanging by wires in the middle, and that was another one that the city rejected. And now we have this final design. So, as you can see, we’re not going to be having the confusing crosswalk striping that, you know, is present there right now. We’re going to have our high emphasis crosswalks. We’re going to reduce the asphalt a little bit, as much as the county would allow us, because you still need to have enough room for a car to be able to go around the people that are trying to make a left on Granada. So, we highlighted some key things on here, even though it’s only shown in one section, like you’ll see that pedestrian traffic signal that’s actually at all four corners. So, you’ll be able to push a button, you’re going to have a ped signal, and there’s going to be traffic lights mounted on top of that. Here’s another picture of the plan view. You can see that we’re going to be adding sidewalks on three corners. On the southeast corner we couldn’t go around, but you’re going to have access through the park.

Public Works Director Diaz: There is a live tree at that location that will not allow us to complete that sidewalk connection.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: The roots are significant. So that’s it.

Public Works Director Diaz: This is just for us to show the progress, it’s not necessarily for a vote, unless you have something to add, but just wanted to bring the project to your attention. We’re about to put it out to bid. We’re finalizing permits, following to going out to bid and obviously that’s a very visual location, so I wanted to bring the project to your attention.

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Mayor Lago: I think it's great, it's much needed. We've had sidewalk issues there for a long time. I know a lot of people have been complaining for a long time about that crossing there. So, I think it's a great opportunity to finally deliver on a project that for years it's been.

Public Works Director Diaz: I think that's a follow up to the whole vision of...I think this will be quite an improvement, especially for people who want to cross Coral Way, I think this is a tremendous pedestrian improvement, for folks who want to do that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I concur on that. I tried to cross there many times. You have to run across to get through there. It's almost impossible. It's nice that we're going to have push buttons there to be able to use. So, you know what my question is going to be?

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Which one.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Which kind of push buttons are you going to have?

Transportation Manager DeZayas: They are not going to be audible. They are going to be just regular push buttons for now, but if you want to look into audible push buttons in the future, we can.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Do we have a bus stop nearby?

Transportation Manager DeZayas: We do. I believe so. Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I would say we need to look into the audible ones, because if someone is blind and they need to use the bus, how are they going to know when to cross.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, you want us to add audible buttons?

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's my suggestion that we need to do that. Any place that you have a bus stop, people that have sight issues can't drive so they are going to need to use the buses and they can't get to the bus if they don't have an audible button.

Public Works Director Diaz: That should be a fairly minor revision. So, we can definitely...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you for bringing this.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a question. Can you show the image, because I drive through that intersection a lot. One of the last images, I think, my question is, what are you doing on the northwest corner.

Public Works Director Diaz: Can we please have the presentation back.

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Transportation Manager DeZayas: Do you want this picture or if you want this one.

Commissioner Menendez: Whichever one.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: This one will show the sidewalk. Its showing the ramp.

Commissioner Menendez: Because I know when you come from, let's say, the Country Club, going south.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Yes.

Public Works Director Diaz: The northeast is tough.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes, but I'm looking at the northwest, so coming south. So are we looking – the top is north, the bottom is south, I would imagine.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Yes.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's a similar configuration, as far as you have two lanes, basically.

Commissioner Menendez: No, because when you approach Coral Way going south, a lot of cars, you know there's a red light and stuff, a lot of cars, there's a lane, sort of space for you to go right onto Coral Way going west, and I know much needed sidewalks, is that lane going to be changed or adjusted.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: You can look at this picture. You'll see that if you're looking at the southbound going westbound, it's striped off as a gore area, that will still give some space for people to be able to navigate about the cars that are going south so they can make a right. That was one of the conditions that Miami-Dade County gave us.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes – because otherwise it bottlenecks.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Exactly.

Commissioner Menendez: And that's the last thing we need, obviously. And the sidewalk – I know there's like a historic wall in that part. The sidewalk goes in front of it or behind it.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Its going to go in front. So, you can see it's like a curve around it.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that we don't bottleneck.

Mayor Lago: I'm just happy to see after three years that this is finally coming to get accomplished. We've been talking about this for a long time and it's going to be a good addition to the neighborhood.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you to staff. H-2.

Commissioner Fernandez: If I could ask one question. The county was working on the light that was not operational there. Have they been able to fix it?

Public Works Director Diaz: I thought we got a picture. I thought it was.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. Alright. Perfect.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'll doublecheck.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.