

CORAL GABLES TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD

TUESDAY MAY 16, 2006

CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER

CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

J J A S O N D J F M A M

MEMBERS

Dunbar, Peter	E	*	P	P	P	P	*	E	E	P	E	P
Goldsmith, Bertram, Jr.	P	*	P	P	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P
Irigoyen, Ramon	P	*	P	E	P	P	*	P	P	A	P	P
Kries, Larry	E	*	P	E	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P
Morrison, Christopher	P	*	P	P	E	E	*	P	P	P	P	P
Talamas, Wayne	P	*	P	P	P	P	*	P	E	P	E	P
Yoder, Douglas	P	*	P	P	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P

COMMISSIONERS

William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commission-as-a-Whole
City Manager
Maria Anderson
Wayne "Chip" Withers
Donald D. Slesnick, II
Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.

A - Absent

E - Excused

P - Present

STAFF

R. Alberto Delgado, P.E. Public Works Director
Lt. Paul Miyares, Coral Gables Police Department
Hope Gibbs, Fire Department
M. Francomacaro, Public Works, Central

GUESTS:

Nan Markowitz, Executive Director, Citizens' Independent Transportation Fund
Dr. Hesham Elbadrawi, Marlin Engineering Consultant
Tim Plummer, David Plummer & Associates, Inc.
James J. Kay, P.E., Engineering Division, Public Works

Chairman Morrison called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

The Board Members welcomed Ms. Markowitz, a former member of the Traffic Advisory Board, who attended this meeting to listen to David Plummer & Associates, Inc.'s presentation on the proposed Coral Gables Trolley Route Expansion.

TROLLEY ROUTE EXPANSION – PRESENTATION

Mr. Plummer explained that as part of this study, five distinct areas were preliminarily analyzed to determine the feasibility of extending the trolley routes. The five areas are: the area between S. W. 8th Street and Flagler Street; the MacFarlane Homestead Historic District; the University of Miami; the Red Road area; and the Riviera Business District.

The area bounded by **Flagler Street on the north, S. W. 8th Street on the south, Douglas Road to the east, and Le Jeune Road on the west** is predominantly residential and has a number of street closures to prevent cut-through traffic. However, Ponce de Leon Boulevard traverses the area providing a direct connection to the businesses on S. W. 8th Street and those just north of Flagler Street. This area also provides an opportunity for connectivity to the existing bus routes on Flagler Street.

The MacFarlane Homestead Historic District is a small residential area located on the east side of US-1, north of Grand Avenue. To provide access to this historic neighborhood from the existing trolley route, the route has to be diverted to either S. W. 37th Avenue or Grand Avenue.

The University of Miami area provides an opportunity to connect to one of the major activity centers within the City. The University of Miami has a population of approximately 15,000 students and 10,000 employees.

The Red Road area is primarily residential with some businesses that provide services to the University and its students. Access to and from the area is cumbersome because of the difficulty of crossing Red Road.

The Riviera Business District area consists primarily of office buildings and commercial uses. The area is also near the Shop at Sunset Place and the South Miami central business district. This area is also considered an activity center.

After preliminary analysis of the areas described above, it was determined that the MacFarlane Homestead Historic District and the Red Road area did not provide the necessary potential ridership to justify the extension of the trolley route.

The Red Road area will get limited trolley service if the Riviera Business District route is chosen. This is because the Riviera Business district route will run on Ponce de Leon Boulevard to South Alhambra Circle before crossing US-1 and northbound on Red Road to Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

The MacFarlane Homestead Historic District can be served by the existing Coconut Grove Circulator. This circulator currently runs from the Coconut Grove Metrorail Station to the Douglas Road Metrorail Station via S. W. 27th Avenue, South Bayshore Drive, Grand Avenue, and S. W. 37th Avenue. MDT would need to expand this route west to either Brooker Street or Jefferson Street. Then it could return to Douglas Road to finish the route at the Douglas Road Metrorail Station. Once at the Douglas Road Metrorail Station, residents from this district could board the Coral Gables Trolley.

ROUTES/ALIGNMENTS

After the selection of the areas where potential ridership as well as defined activity centers exist, three specific trolley routes were developed. These routes are: the Flagler Street Route, the University of Miami Route, and the Riviera Business District Route. The Flagler Street Route is a direct extension of the existing route that runs along Ponce de Leon Boulevard, between S. W. 8th Street and the Douglas Road Metrorail station. Whereas the other two reviewed routes will run

independently from the existing route in order to maintain the headways on the existing trolley route.

The proposed Flagler Street Route will run north and south along Ponce de Leon Boulevard between S. W. 8th Street and Flagler Street. This route will provide a connection between the existing trolley route and the medical office buildings just north of S. W. 8th Street and the Flagler Street corridor.

The University of Miami route was developed to provide University personnel and students a convenient access to the Coral Gables CBD, particularly the Miracle Mile area. This route will run along the southwest leg of Ponce de Leon Boulevard into the University of Miami via Stanford Cricle. This route will continue to the existing Ponce Route at the Douglas Metrorail station.

The Riviera Business District Route was developed to provide convenient access from/to the Riviera District and surrounding attractions and offices with the University of Miami. The route will also connect to the existing Ponce de Leon Route at the Douglas Metrorail station. The Riviera Business District Route will run along the southwest leg of Ponce de Leon and cross US-1 via Alhambra Circle. The alignment of the Riviera Business District Route south of US-1 is centered upon the largest and most concentrated or commercial areas. The route connects back to Ponce de Leon Boulevard by crossing US-1 via Red Road.

The Consultant showed illustrations of the proposed route alignments as well as study's results and riderships. The costs of extending the trolley system were estimated with assistance from the City's Trolley Manager. The approximate capital costs with both routes are \$1,000,000 to \$1,200,000 and the approximate annual maintenance and operations costs are \$500,000 to \$600,000.

Questions and answers followed the presentation.

It was recommended that Public Works request additional funding from Nan Markowitz and Nestor Toledo, of the Citizens' Independent Transportation Fund. Other funding avenues will be investigated such as advertising and federal funding. Mr. Delgado will look into those opportunities.

CODINA PROJECT

The Board Members wanted an update of the Codina/Burger King project. Mr. Plummer informed the Board Members his firm has been working very closely with Wendy Cook (and another resident) from the neighborhood association and that a couple of meetings have been held with the residents and he expects to be back quite a few more times. The neighbors may be coming back for another round and the plans may change again. There is a plan and everyone is very excited about so that we can start making the rounds. I want the Le Jeune Neighborhood Association to be here for a presentation. He also said that the Board will probably see him two or three more times before this process is finished.

Mr. Plummer informed the Board Members that Codina Group will pay for the study, pay for the design and pay for the implementation. It was approved four months ago. Everyone is very excited

about the Le Jeune Road and Segovia and it is expected that the City National-Codina Building will be completed by the end of this year; not the Burger King headquarters.

Mr. Plummer noted that the residents want raised islands installed. It could be ramps landscaped with low vegetation, right in, right out. Lt. Miyares noted that this is a very populated area and expressed his concern about the diverters or semi-closures along Segovia Street, since they may interfere with the east-west routes for emergency vehicles. Tim Plummer to discuss with Fire Chief Cook. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Dunbar: "How does lane narrowing on this way differ from what was done on Granada, which quite frankly was more effective." Mr. Plummer noted that this was not going to lower the volumes at all. It might lower the speed. They do not have a big speed issue, but it is really one of the least restrictive traffic calming devices. Really what the residents came up with was that something needs to be done with Valencia, but there is not a lot you can do. The numbers for Valencia, instead of 150 they are getting 350. They are never going to get it down because of other things that are going on. David Plummer and Associates tried to get with the Block Captain and explain the situation, informed them what can be done to make this better. It came down to more aesthetic to help a little bit. It would be landscaped, but understand that it is not going to go from 150 to 90 in the peak hours. So, there is not a lot you can do and they seemed pretty happy with that.

Mr. Kries asked about circles and Mr. Plummer noted that the only one there now is on Almeria so what they are proposing again is to have one from Valencia and then start really about every other block all the way down. Residents wanted traffic circles at every intersection, and that is how it started.

Mr. Plummer noted that the other thing the neighbors are struggling with and a lot of people do, is WOW! We are going to beautify Segovia, we are going to put a median in, great landscaping and we have to put all those signs in. Do we have to? Well, if you want Paul Miyares' group to be able to enforce something, we have to have signs up, so they are kind of struggling with that. And the last conversation was that Codina is willing to pay for more decorative sign posts and frames for the signs. When questioned whether the County would approve that, Mr. Plummer informed the Board Members that they would start with them.

Mr. Kries asked about the Segovia Median and Mr. Plummer noted that the Segovia Media is running parallel with this project right now. The City has been working with the County and Codina is going to be a significant player, as well. The biggest problem is that to use County's monies the consultant needs to go through the Impact Fees and to do that, the project must be a capacity improvement project. We are taking a lane out on each direction, which will be improving the bicycle capacity and which is what the consultant is trying to work out with the County right now, a bike lane.

Mr. Dunbar noted that the problem with that intersection is the asphalt. "There is no striping. You have no idea where you are supposed to be driving from any direction. All the striping is gone. I drive through there three times a week, and I still get confused."

Mr. Plummer thanked the Board Members for this opportunity to make his presentation and said he will be seeing the Board Members again about the Trolley Project.

Commitment forms were distributed to the members for their signatures. After notarization they will be forwarded to the City Clerk.

Upon motion made by Mr. Kries, seconded by Mr. Irigoyen, the Minutes of April 18, 2006 were approved as distributed.

TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS

Mr. Delgado informed the Board Members that there were \$3,000,000.00 for traffic calming installations. Out of that, we have used \$200,000.00.

Dr. Yoder: "Blue Road roundabouts, those still have to be designed." Mr. Delgado noted that Public Works had asked Mrs. Calas for authorization to proceed with the design.

Dr. Yoder: "We still need to design and build them."

Mr. Delgado: "The idea is if they say yes, to go ahead with the design, which will take a month or so and then bid it out. Dr. Yoder then asked if we were still going to be able to get traffic on Blue Road and Mr. Delgado informed him that we will. Like we did on Maynada and South Alhambra and in record time. "The one on Blue Road to me is easier than the one on South Alhambra Circle," Mr. Delgado said.

As directed at the April meeting, Mr. Delgado prepared and had hand-delivered three letters to the County: indicating the Board's recommendations on the vote; requesting approval to proceed with the design of the Blue Road roundabouts; and requesting the County reconsider the installation of a traffic light at Loquat, to facilitate ingress and egress at the G. W. Carver Middle School drop-off.

G. W. CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. Morrison will draft a letter to the County informing them that, after meeting with Carver Middle School staff, the Miami-Dade County School Board representatives and residents of the area, the Traffic Advisory Board had recommended the installation of a traffic light. Instead, the County installed diverters. Mr. Morrison will request that the County reconsider, remove the diverters and install the traffic light.

Dr. Elbadrawi informed the Members that he had given Jeff Cohen, the County Engineer, a copy of the study that we did to show that there is a need for a traffic light. The County will review the plans and the need for the traffic light, as recommended by the Board. Once this is approved, the County will remove the two diverters.

Mr. Dunbar mentioned that G. W. Carver Middle School's drop-off works great. It was noticed that with the diverters, parents/drivers drop-off the children at the school and since the diverters force them to go north and 80% want to go back south, they make a U turn at the Circle K store and proceed south, which defeats the purpose.

TRAFFIC CALMING REPORT

Mr. Dunbar noted that at an event he attended on Friday night, well attended by a lot of Coral Gables residents, four or five living in the area of Maynada, Alfonso, and South Alhambra Circle had nothing but praise for the Maynada Circles. They were very excited because the stop signs created a mess of back-ups. All that remains is the landscaping which is strictly cosmetic.

Mr. Delgado informed the Members that the City had received numerous complaints and negative response to the Maynada Circles while they were being installed, a resident (Dr. Ricci) even called the City Manager's office to complain. Since their installation, the City has not heard anything further.

Mr. Morrison noted that he had also received numerous e-mails complaining about the Maynada Circles, but nothing after their installation.

Mr. Delgado informed the Members that our traffic circle contractor will no longer work for the City, under the present contract, because of the ever increasing prices of materials and we are sorry he wants to pull out, because he is very good and has worked for the City for eight years. His contract would have expired in two months. Public Works will be going out for bid, but unfortunately it will take approximately two months before we can proceed with the installation of traffic calming devices.

Once a contractor is selected, it must that selection must be approved by the City Commission and there is only one meeting in July. This contractor is very good and we had hoped that he would have worked on the Le Jeune Road and Granada Circle traffic calming device before his contract expired.

The Board Members wanted to know if the contractor could charge the City higher prices, but were informed that all contractors must abide by the terms and price of the contract once it is awarded. This contractor quoted unit prices. The Board Members also wanted to know if the funds would be allocated and Mr. Delgado noted that yes, the funds will be allocated and still be available.

Mr. Irigoyen wanted to know if this was going to affect the Cadiz Avenue and South Alhambra modification. Mr. Delgado noted that Public Works had sent a letter to the County asking them if we could proceed but have not received anything yet. Dr. Elbadrawi to check with the County next week. Mr. Irigoyen wanted to know if we could have a back-up contractor since we are missing some precious time. The City had only selected one contractor.

Mr. Delgado explained that the funding is on a separate account and hopefully we will be able to proceed with Bird Road, Blue Road, and, if the County approves, Hardee. As soon as we have a new contractor we will proceed. We need to have a traffic plan in place before we proceed with construction.

As explained at a previous meeting, Mr. Delgado noted that we would need to sign another JPA to install the Coral Way and Segovia Roundabout. Public Works will proceed with the design for the

Biltmore Way and Segovia roundabout. Public Works went out for bids for the Segovia and Coral Way calming device.

Mr. Goldsmith noted that a couple of days before, he had heard a lot of noise from the Hardee/Mathieson Park, heavy machinery, backhoes. Mr. Goldsmith thought they might be going to building something there. This is County jurisdiction. Mr. Delgado informed him that it was probably the heavy equipment clearing the area of vegetation and cleaning it because we had complained.

EDGEWATER DRIVE

Mr. Morrison had received an e-mail from Mr. Ettman, who lives on Edgewater Drive. Mr. Ettman is canvassing the area residents and collecting signatures to request the City install speed tables. Mr. Morrison indicated that we should offer a reply to Mr. Ettman, and Vice-Mayor Anderson. Although Mr. Delgado replied to Mr. Ettman's e-mail, he asked Esther Zabalo to explain, in detail, the lengthy process to install traffic calming devices. The Board Members were reminded of the meetings held with the Edgewater Drive residents, as well as the meeting with Mr. Tony Cantillo, to discuss various traffic calming devices for that area. Although the County did not approve the installation of speed tables at that time, it seems likely they may approve them now.

Commissioner Cabrera wants the Board Members to view the portion of the City Commission meeting tape where the proposed Coral Gables Trolley Program was originally discussed. Mr. Morrison will view the tape and will share and critique with the Board Members at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Dunbar: "The residents of Sunrise, East Sunrise, have we had any actions over there?" Dr. Elbadrawi noted that we have taken counts and did a study. Mr. Dunbar noted that he was there and it is very isolated and is all residents. Dr. Elbadrawi: "We took two counts. Left the counters 72 hours. The average is 27 MPH so we do not see a problem."

Mr. Dunbar noted that since there is so much pavement on Sunrise, maybe just stripe a bike lane on one side and narrow the pavement. He saw people speeding 30 MPH.

The Chairman asked if any of the Board Members had any further questions. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.