

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-3
February 14, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jim Cason

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suarez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Police Chief, Ed Hudak

Senior Transportation Engineer, Melissa DeZayas

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-3 [1:40 p.m.]

A discussion regarding the signalization at the intersection of Granada Boulevard and Blue Road.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)

Mayor Lago: We can jump to Commissioner Menendez and then we'll come back to G-7. G-3.

Chief Hudak: Yes sir. So, we're talking about from the 900 to the 1200 Block of Blue Road, Commissioner Menendez brought it up. We've been dealing with the resident there since October of 2021, when it was first brought to our attention that they had moved in. I have the documents. We have done 71 directed traffic patrols in that area. We wrote 31 traffic stops and of that about 19 to 20 tickets. We do not see an extremely high amount of speed, however, there is a backup construction cut-through on top of that. So with the construction on Blue Road that we see in front of the Riviera Country Club, we also can't do a traffic study with DOT because they won't do it when it's under study, which I know that too well, because in front of our building as well it

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happens. So, our average speed is about 46 miles per hour, when we are actually writing tickets in the 1100 Block. Our latest test and Major Baublitz is here, from the 1100 Block of Blue Road which was taken up until September, I'm sorry, February 22 of 2022, so about a year ago. Our average speed from the indication was 85th percentile was 28.49 miles an hour, so we're right at 30. Needless to say, people are buzzing through. The highest speed recorded at that time was 92 miles an hour, the one car. So, we continue to look at that area. It's tough for us to get a traffic study going on right now. Some of my retired or our retired police officers, the neighborhood traffic units, we have them in there. They have not seen a large number of these kinds of speed violations, although they do come back to me on a regular basis that states that we have been having a big traffic backup coming through Blue Road. Along the sidelines that we've talked about in another e-mail, this is one of those roads where if you remove those service truck signs that we had talked about, I'm not sure if that's in there, where we would not have the teeth to stop some of those tractor trailers cutting through, because they will come from U.S.-1 all the way down Blue Road to get out of our city, even with the traffic circles, which we saw part of our toolbox, if you will, and as we talked about earlier at the University of Miami, we've had the same issue where we were able to enforce that and make that happen there, as far as people staging. I don't know if there are any other questions Commissioner.

Commissioner Menendez: I just want to comment. Does Communications have the image that I asked to be put up of Granada and Blue Road at the stop light. Well, if you do, please put it up. So the Mayor has talked about and we've talked about in the past traffic coming off U.S.-1 and Ponce going north on Granada and when you get to the stoplight, there it is, when you get to the stoplight at Blue Road going north, if any car going north on Granada wants to turn left towards the Riviera Country Club, that stops all the traffic behind it, because there is only room for one car. So, I was stuck at that light and if there are ten cars in line and two decide that they want to turn, you go through two or three light cycles before you actually get through. So when I was studying that, I talked to the Manager and his team, if somehow, somehow we got the county to change those stop lights that you see there in red to have a turn signal, so if that lane got the turn signal and a green light at the same time, all ten cars would go through, because you're going to turn or go straight. You don't have to expand the road, you don't have to change the road, just those two lights. If you had that green light and the arrow, turn arrow, at the same time for 15 seconds you clear, and you would never have backed up traffic. That's a focus of mine.

Vice Mayor Mena: The southbound will be red still.

Commissioner Menendez: Like any other intersection we have. Let's say this one goes through first, 15 seconds, you clear that lane and then you can have the traffic.

City Manager Iglesias: Southbound would have to be red.

Commissioner Menendez: The southbound lane has a turn lane, turn lane, so they don't really back up. Once you get in that turn lane you can turn. Eastbound has a turn signal, when you're turning left on Granada off of Bird, I mean off of Blue. The only lane that doesn't have either a turn lane or a turn signal is the northbound Granada which is why you have traffic backing up for two or three cycles, but if you put the arrow, the stoplights with an arrow and you do them both green and arrow at the same time, like we have here on Miracle Mile and LeJeune.

Mayor Lago: And the safety valve there which the Manager and I have worked on for a long time with the Chief is, if you look to the right, is that poor neighbor on the corner, his entire front yard is just destroyed, like literally. I'm talking about four, five feet in that cars just go off the street and they go onto the grass, and they make a right turn on Blue Road or they get back onto the street, in an effort to try to avoid the car that's waiting to make a lefthand turn there. We've talked about everything. I've sat there with the Manager and the Chief. We've talked about let's curb it. We've talked about doing a traffic circle there. We've talked about seeing if we can get a lefthand turning lane dedicated only for that, the street is so tight that you can't.

Commissioner Menendez: With this stoplight, if you put a stoplight with a turn signal and the green at the same time, traffic will flow, you'll never have it back up.

Chief Hudak: I'm not an engineer, but it will be a short-lived arrow because that back-up coming southbound because that right turn lane is very short logistically.

Mayor Lago: How can we get like a study. Can we get the county?

Chief Hudak: The biggest issue with the studies, Mayor, is if there is any kind of construction that affords the normal flow, because they won't do it. I've been trying to get a stop sign in front of the station, because of the construction of the garage they won't do the study, and I understand that. So, until Blue Road is open and moving and what we've talked about, I don't think they would do a study to justify or to validate.

Commissioner Menendez: What you commented a little while ago, the southbound Granada, yes, traffic backs up, but it clears, because you have an option when you go there. You can turn or go straight, northbound doesn't have that option. If we gave them the option, traffic wouldn't back up.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, what are we going to do?

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor and Commissioners, the problem we have is that we'd have to completely stop southbound traffic, which may be an issue, so what we can do is – and that's also a signalized intersection.

Mayor Lago: What I'm asking is, can we ask the county to just look at this and provide us their best practices, what are their best practices.

City Manager Iglesias: That's what we can do. Have the county – ask the county to please take a look at that intersection.

Commissioner Menendez: Can you specifically give them this option as a solution, because I don't want them to come back with...

Mayor Lago: Did they give you an answer?

Ms. DeZayas: No. I sent it three weeks ago, approximately, and I described the situation, I described what you were talking about which is basically a split phase. I have not gotten a response yet, because like the Chief said, whenever you have maintenance of traffic, it's not typical traffic conditions so they don't like to do a study.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So can you do me a favor, can you copy me on the e-mail, through the Manager, copy me on the e-mail, this is a recap as a follow-up. At the request of the Mayor, and the City Manager, I'm copying my Commissioners, my Commission, because this was brought up on the Commission meeting on Tuesday, do it tomorrow, and they are asking for an update from the county. Then I will chime in and make a request from the county saying, please help us, because we're trying to find a solution and the county is the one that's in the driver seat here. We need your help on this, because this is affecting quality of life, its affecting people's front yards, its affecting traffic, its affecting the school down the street. So, I would like to figure something out here. Give us an answer. No is no. It's okay. Its fine, then no. How about a circle? Can we do a circle there where traffic continues to flow.

Ms. DeZayas: Those were things that we've requested in the past.

Mayor Lago: Just tell me and I'll put a little pressure, a little bit of soft pressure.

City Manager Iglesias: There's a left turn going south, there's a turn going north, so for them to have left turn signals without storage is going to be very, very difficult. So, they might come back saying expand that side to put a left turn lane.

Mayor Lago: That's perfectly fine.

Ms. DeZayas: So, what the Manager is referring to, if you have one lane and you have people making a left here, there're still blocking the people that are trying to make it through, so you need kind of a storage lane.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, they're not, because the other people have a red.

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Commissioner Menendez: The other side has a red; southbound has a red, northbound has green and an arrow, 15 seconds; southbound doesn't get into the intersection.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, but you're completely stopping the southbound traffic when you do that.

Commissioner Menendez: But they are stopped when east and west is green.

City Manager Iglesias: And that traffic has a left turn, so we might come back and say, put a left turn lane on both sides, so we can do left turns without stopping the flow after the left turn lane is initiated.

Vice Mayor Mena: I understand you would have to pause the southbound, obviously.

City Manager Iglesias: Exactly.

Commissioner Menendez: You have to pause, but right now they are stopped anyways when east and west is going green.

Ms. DeZayas: Since you have two collectors...

Commissioner Menendez: Here on Miracle Mile you've got the eastbound coming off Biltmore Way, one side gets green and an arrow, and then the other side, its synchronized. Its not a new concept.

Commissioner Anderson: Ask and you may receive.

Mayor Lago: Let's do this. Write an e-mail through the Manager, copy me on it, copy my colleagues on the Commission. I will hit everybody in the county and ask for assistance for a lifeline, okay.

Commissioner Anderson: We'll all apply our respective pressures.

Mayor Lago: Done. Perfect. Thank you so much.