

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
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

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Transportation Division Manager, Melissa DeZayas

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-5

Update on past, present and future City Transportation Projects
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: You want to talk F-5, which is your next item and then we'll talk sidewalks which is F-6.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes, since we have the team up here right now.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Past, present and future City Transportation Projects. The latest update I got from FDOT was in response to an email that I sent after our letter went out addressing Bird Road, because a resident reminded me that they had in the pipeline a request for a speed reduction there. The response I got back just this past week, states that they are pleased to inform us that they are actively addressing several of the requested items by the end of the calendar year four

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electronic speed signs; three for westbound drivers on Bird Road near Segovia Street, University Drive and San Amaro Drive; and one for eastbound drivers on Bird Road near Alhambra Circle will be installed. The existing posted speed limits will remain unchanged, this is talking about Bird Road, but the speed feedback signs will improve compliance with a posted 35 mile an hour speed limit. So, in my email to FDOT regarding Bird Road, I pointed out to them, in one direction it's 35 miles an hour, and in another direction it's 40. So, this is what FDOT plans on doing now. Perhaps the feedback signs will give us some more data and information to work with. Hopefully, it solves the problem on Bird. This project also includes a no lefthand turn eastbound on San Amaro Drive. So, we're moving forward. Ms. DeZayas has worked very hard on trying to give us a history, because I know sometimes it seems like we're not moving very fast, but the history of what our city has done in traffic calming and where we're heading. So, the floor is yours.

Public Works Director Diaz: Presentation please.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: So, we were asked to put together a presentation about what we've done in the past, what we're working on right now, and the projects that we're going to have coming up. So, this slide basically has a list of all the devices and projects that we worked on within the last four to five years. We've completed all of the traffic calming, well, all the speed tables and cushions in Zone 1 and 2, except for 2, and those will be completed within the next few weeks. We had twelve speed tables that were installed over at Red/Bird. We had a mid-block crosswalk that was installed on Aragon by the Museum. We had the traffic calming on Aragon and Giralda, which were four speed tables and two raised intersections. We had the intersection improvement that was done recently on North Greenway and Granada. We had the speed cushions that were installed on Biltmore Drive and a couple speed cushions that were installed on Solano Prado. We had the asphalt path that we put in at the golf course and in addition to all of that, we've also had about eleven miles worth of sidewalk repairs. What I did was, I basically divided up the projects that we're working on, based on the different phases. So, in engineering you have a planning phase, you have a design phase, and you have a construction phase. So, right now, our planning phase that we're working on is on Biltmore Way, the Flagler Section, and Venetia Terrace, which we'll talk about in the next.

Public Works Director Diaz: And before you move on, we are trying to get started on the design of Biltmore Way. We're negotiating a price for design for those improvements, so it's moving in that direction. Flagler Section – after we did a whole traffic study that the county requested for the improvements on Ponce, they are asking for some additional studies done, which unfortunately we cannot do until the fall, because now we're entering into the summer. And then Venetia Terrace, I think is a separate discussion on that one, so we can...

Transportation Manager DeZayas: We're going to go into more detail with Venetia Terrace, but we basically expanded the study area, because of the feedback that we received from the residents at the community meeting. We requested shield data, basically at 25 different locations to see if any of these locations would qualify for traffic calming. So, the projects that we have in design right now, we have one traffic circle in Zone 1 and several in Zone 2. Those need to – one of them is moving forward. The ones in Zone 2 still need to be balloted. We have a raised intersection, and we have some intersection improvements. We have the Alhambra Circle sidewalk and traffic

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calming, which we'll be talking about on the next item. The Pisano Avenue sidewalk and the South Alhambra bike lanes. The South Alhambra bike lanes – the design is basically complete. The only issue is that we have some utilities that we're working with FPL to see if we get some help with getting some of the anchors.

Public Works Director Diaz: There are some anchors to get out of the way. We're working with FPL to have them moved out of the way.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Basically wires.

Public Works Director Diaz: The guide wires.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: The guide wires.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct. That's the only thing that's pending there for us to put that project out to bid.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: So that one, we should be starting construction soon. And then, these four – the design is complete, but I still wanted to put them in the ongoing design, because we just finished design and they are not necessarily starting construction. They are not in construction right now, but they will be starting construction very soon, because they are either in the permitting or in the procurement phase. So, Ponce Phase 3, and last mile transit right now are out to bid. Coral Way and Granada, we will be going out to bid very, very soon.

Public Works Director Diaz: We just discussed that earlier today, and I think that one is pending – do we have permits on that?

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Yes. It's right now with DERM.

Public Works Director Diaz: And that's a fairly benign, so that's going to go out to bid in the next couple of weeks.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Yes. And then Blue Road sidewalk – we got the approval from Miami-Dade County. Right now, we're going through the tree permit, you know.

Public Works Director Diaz: With the county because Blue Road is a county road, so we're working with the county.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: But we've already reached out to the contractor for proposals so that we can start construction as soon as we have that approval. So ongoing projects that we have in construction right now. We have the 600 Block of Mendoza...

Public Works Director Diaz: And if I may, I'm sorry to interrupt you. These are the projects that either we're working on right now or we're literally just about to start within the next month, month and-a-half. Just keep that in mind. So, they are just literally on the cusp of going forward.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: So, the 600 Block of Mendoza was supposed to be completed yesterday. I still put it on the slide because we're working on it. We still have one left on Mendoza. Then we're going to be moving to the 300 Block of Alescio and then we'll be going back to the 400 Block of Almeria before we move into the rest of the traffic calming devices that we have in Zone 3. We are completing University Drive sidewalks. There are some tree plantings and swales that we're working on and we're going to be milling and resurfacing the roadway as well. We hope to be done within the next two weeks, but we're working out some details with the county regarding some traffic loops that are going to be removed as part of the milling and resurfacing of the roadway; and these are the sidewalk repair locations that are eminent, but its an ongoing list and we just keep on addressing them and keep going as they get addressed. So, future projects as you know are currently going to be in the planning phase very soon. DeSoto Fountain which was one that you guys voted on earlier today. One of the other projects that we have had feedback from residents that they would like to see some improvements would be another intersection on Coral Way, which is Coral Way and Columbus. We've had residents reach out that they would like to see some pedestrian improvements, because it's very difficult to cross at that intersection. So that's one that we've also asked for some additional funds to see here in the budget to hopefully start planning and design. The Commodore Trail, that's a project that we're actually working with Miami-Dade County and City of Miami. Our portion is very small but it's in the planning phase right now. The Granada Boulevard sidewalks – All the sidewalks and projects listed below the Commodore Trail are all ones that we're submitting for this budget season, so it's very preliminary.

Mayor Lago: So, the Blue Road sidewalks, they are not funded at all.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes. Yes. This is a different location.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: This is west of Riviera.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a quick question. These future projects, they have the green light.

Public Works Director Diaz: No. Some of them. No. DeSoto Fountain, we just got this Commission's blessing for us to apply for a grant, which if we do get the grant that will be the effective green light. Commodore Trail has already been funded. I think everything else; those are things that we're asking funding for through the budget cycle.

Commissioner Menendez: My only other comment or question and then a comment. Is this available to the public, because we always get a lot of questions as to, well, the city is not doing this or doing that, because maybe in their area we're not, but we are covering a lot of areas. Is this kind of information easily accessible and if not, can we do something like this, so somebody maybe can work on condensed versions so people can see where we have projects.

Public Works Director Diaz: Some of it is. I think we can make it easier to access.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: Perhaps on a short-term just email this presentation to all of us.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And then we'll work out some place on the website to have more ongoing information, because it would make it easier, not only for the residents, but it would make it easier for this entire Commission. We'd be able to answer questions that residents have.

Commissioner Menendez: Point to that.

Commissioner Fernandez: And some of those points that you brought up, you said like 18 are currently in the works. If you can give us the locations of those as well.

Public Works Director Diaz: Sure.

Commissioner Fernandez: That would be great.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: So, is the Granada Boulevard sidewalks that's from the bridge.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: So, as part of the Blue Road sidewalks, we're going to be doing from the bridge to Blue, that's going to be something that we just add on while we're there. What we were looking at was maybe looking at bigger projects from Bird to Blue and then Blue to U.S.-1.

Mayor Lago: We're not even planning. There's no budget, there's nothing.

Public Works Director Diaz: These are just the things that are proposed. Correct.

Mayor Lago: I think that's a great project. I've said it before. Much needed.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Love it. A lot of these are great projects, but we also need resident buy-in. My conversation with FDOT when I had the meeting with you all present as well and I had learned at a prior point in time that FDOT was going to put the sidewalks in on Bird Road on the south side. They then added to that, well we still have to have resident outreach. I said, well what if we go door-to-door and we just get signatures. Keep this expedited and get this sidewalk in, because what we're trying to do is we're trying to get kids to school safely. We're trying to get all these things done safely. So, I think it's really important that we have the resident buy-in and if we have residents in those areas who are willing to go door-to-door and get the signatures just like we had for the South Alhambra bike lane, it's going to really help move these projects forward, because we can't afford to have another incident where we get a grant and we are going out for grants for these things, and then reject the money because residents didn't speak on whether or not they wanted it. I think that's important. Sorry to interrupt.

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Transportation Manager DeZayas: No. So future projects that will be entering the design phase very soon. We spoke about Zones 4 and 5, those will be entering design as soon as we get this contract that we have out. Columbus Boulevard from Coral Way to Anastasia Avenue, that's actually a project that we got some funding for from the state, it will be a milling and resurfacing and drainage project. The roadway there is in pretty bad condition, but we need to look at drainage improvements there and we'll be doing some milling and resurfacing. So, we've already reached out to a consultant for a proposal. We should be deciding – it should be designed very soon. They said they can get it turned around pretty quickly and then we will be starting construction. And then University Drive sidewalks from Camposano Drive to Pisano Avenue. There's a map there in the bottom right corner. It's basically along Camposano Drive where the sidewalks end. We would be continuing that sidewalk going around the corner to where the bus-stop is. We're going to be reaching out to Miami-Dade County to see if we can get a mid-block crosswalk and then we will be continuing along the east side of Pisano Avenue, of University Drive to Pisano Avenue.

Commissioner Fernandez: That Columbus Boulevard is a major need. It's probably one of the worst patches of road we have in the entire city. And the edges of the road sometimes have about a foot of a drop into the swale.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, it's dangerous for cars to drive into the swale because of the deep.

Public Works Director Diaz: Unfortunately, there was a time countywide really, you see this throughout a lot of areas. City of Miami for some reason the practice was just overlay roads without milling, and then over time you got several inches. I did a job in Miami years ago where we actually removed eight inches of asphalt.

Commissioner Fernandez: You probably have at least that there.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, yes. And that area – and that's the end result. We don't do that anymore.

Vice Mayor Anderson: From a road-raising standpoint, it might seem like it makes sense, but then if you just dump additional soil in there you are burying whatever landscaping and trees that are on the side.

Public Works Director Diaz: Not only that, you create an issue where now your sidewalks become defacto gutters. Now all the water runs off and it pulls on the sidewalk and then it creates a different problem altogether.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Coral Way was like that, you needed rubber boots.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely. And Coral Way has that condition.

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Commissioner Menendez: Then that will be one road that the chicken will never be able to cross. It's too high. There's my joke for the afternoon.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: These will be the projects that are going to enter construction soon. There's going to be some of them on this list are ones that you already saw on previous slides, but the reason that we put them on there is because they are going to be starting construction hopefully this year if design goes through quickly. So citywide traffic calming, we're going to be working on Zones 3 and 4. Hopefully this year we'll be 4; 3, we anticipate will be completed by this fiscal year.

Public Works Director Diaz: And Zone 4 we should start construction towards the end of the year. At that point, we'll have to make a call, do we really want to start working during Christmas or not, but we don't have to make the decision right now, but depending on when the design has the construction available, we can have that conversation.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Columbus Boulevard from Coral Way to Anastasia, the consultant has committed that they would be completing the design quickly. However, we're hoping to start construction very soon. It's a little bit tricky because we want to time it with the times that school's out – St. Teresa and Sevilla, we don't want to impact that.

Public Works Director Diaz: We are actually talking about phasing the job about maybe doing some areas during the summer and then leaving the rest for later, but just things that we're discussing a way to make that a little smoother.

Commissioner Fernandez: You also have 4th of July. That's something else you wouldn't want to time it around 4th of July.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Details.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: So, Ponce Phase 3 is going to be starting very soon. Like I said, it was out to bid. Last mile transit is also out to bid. Coral Way and Granada will be out to bid very, very soon. Alhambra Circle sidewalk and traffic calming, if we can decide on which option we want to move forward with to take to the residents, that will start construction. The traffic calming portion of it is dependent on which option we go with, because the county would like to see where we're placing the sidewalk as part of that project.

Mayor Lago: So can we talk about that really quickly. I know I have it on my item on F-6, but we might as well just address now. What's the next step? Where are we at?

Public Works Director Diaz: We need to make a call as to where we're going to put the sidewalk.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Have we reached out to the residents?

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Public Works Director Diaz: Not yet. The idea was for us to have this discussion and then reach out to them later. We do have a couple of slides for a separate presentation.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Perfect. Then we'll wait for the next one.

Public Works Director Diaz: This is the last slide, right.

Transportation Manager DeZayas: Yes, this is the last slide. So Blue Road, we're going to be starting construction very soon, just the tree permits. Pisano Avenue, we should be starting construction this year. Just working out a few little drainage details that need to be worked out. South Alhambra, it's just a coordination with FPL that's holding up that project. Valencia Avenue bulb-outs, that one the design is complete. We've asked for a proposal so we can start construction, and then we're going to be continuing with our sidewalk repairs and milling and resurfacing that we have.

Mayor Lago: Good stuff. Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, you want to move onto sidewalks.

Mayor Lago: Let's do it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Because I'd like to see.

Mayor Lago: So, F-6.