

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-9
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
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz
Sr. Transportation Engineer, Melissa DeZayas**

Public Speaker(s)

**Bart Upthegrove
Vicky Busot
Evelyn Diaz
Zully Pardo**

Agenda Item G-9 [12:48 p.m.]
Dover Kohl Biltmore Way and Flagler Section update. (Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Alright, we're going to skip to G-9.

Commissioner Cason: G-9.

Mayor Lago: Moving onto G-9.

Commissioner Anderson: Oh, Dover Kohl.

Mayor Lago: Okay. G-9.

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City Manager Iglesias: That's being presented by Public Works Director and our Transportation Manager.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Commissioner Anderson, your item.

Commissioner Anderson: So, I want to talk about the Biltmore Way project and the Flagler Section update. I have been meeting with some residents along Biltmore Way. I've been meeting with some folks along Valencia, as well. One of these items, in my opinion, needs to come to a vote on Biltmore Way for the residents that are affected there, as well as Valencia, because we are going to have a bicycle lane going to our Mobility Hub. We can't have Biltmore Way voting for Valencia and Valencia voting for Biltmore Way. We need to have a contiguous-type vote system on bicycle infrastructure, because there's a tug-o-war that's going to go on, on that particular issue.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm going to ask for the update when we are going to have our next presentation, ask that a traffic study be included, because as you're looking at the intersection right there of the circle, that circle before you hit it, merges down to one lane coming into the circle heading westbound, okay, immediately opens up to two lanes. So, you already have a merging condition, as you're coming around heading eastbound. I'm trying to remember the name of the street, comes at an angle, De Soto, that's a single lane.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Yes – from Venetian coming round. You have all residential streets, it's a single lane, stays a single lane for a distance, and then all of a sudden it opens up to two lanes heading eastbound. My observations of the traffic in that area every time I go through, whether its morning, evening, night, middle of the day, the traffic is heavier between the circle, okay, and the 400-500 Block than it is on the west end. So, I think people need information to be able to make decisions with. It's a little difficult to do it in a vacuum. The Coral Way traffic dumps in for the section heading between the circle and LeJeune Road. That's the major flow that you see going in that direction and vice versa, for the traffic heading back out going home. Those are my thoughts on this and I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'll go through this as a condensed version of the presentation that we did in front of – for the workshop that we did for the community. The area specifically that we were looking at originally was the section from Anderson to Hernando, and we did come up with multiple design alternatives. That's what the existing condition looks like for most of the corridors, like the Commission was saying. You have two travel lanes in each direction with angle parking and sidewalks, very little if any landscaping whatsoever. This is public hold Option I, which is the bare minimum, no parking loss. This is what got the most welcomed response from the residents that were present at the meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: May I ask you from the people that signed up, what percentage of those lived on Biltmore Way and what percentage of those are reflective of the total population on Biltmore Way.

Public Works Director Diaz: I don't think we can have that breakdown. I think...

Ms. DeZayas: Percentage-wise no, but I can tell you that the Option I, it was only Biltmore Way residents that were basically saying Option I, and then the ones that – there were three other options that they had mentioned, but those were from other residents that were not Biltmore Way residents.

Commissioner Anderson: Biltmore II Building did vote for a different option, okay.

Mayor Lago: Was there an option, sorry to interrupt you, oh, you have them all, I'm sorry. I apologize.

Public Works Director Diaz: Oh, yes, absolutely. I'm going to go through.

Mayor Lago: Sorry.

Commissioner Anderson: Based upon the large number of people that live on Biltmore Way, there were a number of folks that couldn't attend.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: And as typically happens whether its bike lanes on South Alhambra or so forth, there is a voting process that occurs.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Because we all can attend these public meetings.

Public Works Director Diaz: And that first option, obviously, and if I go back to it...

Ms. DeZayas: One thing I do want to bring up, Commissioner Anderson is, for the residents that were unable to attend the meeting, we do have the options online and we have, like feedback that the residents can give regarding the options that are available that we've presented at the meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: And for bicycle lanes we also have a ballot that occurs, correct.

Ms. DeZayas: Well, it's not a ballot, it's just feedback to see which options they are in favor.

Commissioner Anderson: But if it's a bicycle lane issue and whether its South Alhambra or not, we also have a ballot process.

Ms. DeZayas: Yes.

Public Works Director Diaz: We can come up with a process. I don't think that's something that is necessarily codified, so we can choose how we move forward at your direction.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a quick question. I remember at the workshop there were two options that didn't get any votes, which were those?

Public Works Director Diaz: We're going to go through that.

Commissioner Menendez: I know you're going to show us all, but there were two that the residents...

Public Works Director Diaz: This is obviously, the simplest one. Those are twelve-foot-wide sidewalks, you could just remove the sidewalk, pull some trees, structural soils. They would have to be medium size trees because the space that you still have is not enough for you to put something larger, like an oak, but it would be a decent size tree. Option II – and these are things that eventually as we go through the traffic study, we need to figure out where it goes, right, but there is a possibility of eliminating one lane, because you have a one-way pair, potentially with Coral Way is one-way eastbound, so there is more traffic going in that direction than the other one. So that was one of the options that we presented when you've got two lanes on one side and one lane on the other, and that will allow for wider sidewalks, meaning you put larger trees, obviously at a higher expense.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. Right. And the traffic study figures were not available when the comments were received.

Public Works Director Diaz: We did ask for a grant for a traffic study, we didn't get it, so funding on this project that was available is somewhat limited.

Commissioner Anderson: How much would it cost to do a traffic study here?

Ms. DeZayas: The traffic study was about, I think it was like \$150,000, because it was an extensive study, since we weren't really sure what options we were looking for, we were basically asking for a study for all the options, so it was a comprehensive study.

Public Works Director Diaz: We may be able to reduce our cost if we reduce – because we came up with like multiple options. Every option needs to be looked at to some extent individually, so if we can limit the scope, we can probably bring that number down a little bit, but we need to make a decision as to which scope are we going to proceed to whatever the next phase is. So, this is another option now with the bike lane. One of the concerns that in our involvement from the beginning is about the loss of parking space. So now we're going into adding a two-way bicycle lane in order to fit that, you're looking at putting parallel parking on one side with a loss of approximately 26 parking spaces.

Commissioner Anderson: That got zero votes, correct.

Public Works Director Diaz: Pretty much, yes. I think it got booed.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes, because the parallel parking is a non-starter.

Public Works Director Diaz: And then we came up with different iterations of the same – this is one option. Fortunately, if you are going to keep two lanes of traffic, the only way we can fit that and do a bike lane is to go to parallel parking, otherwise it doesn't fit. That will lose 55 parking spaces, that was not very well received either.

Commissioner Anderson: That got no votes, so we can scratch that from the pallet.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm in agreement with Commissioner Anderson.

Public Works Director Diaz: This option will only be, and this is subject to, obviously review and approved by the county and what the traffic study will tell us. If you eliminate two lanes of traffic and only west of the Segovia Circle, because there is no way we are going to be able to do that on the other side of the circle, but this will basically produce no loss of parking spaces and you have enough right-of-way to fit that condition.

Ms. DeZayas: This one got a vote.

Public Works Director Diaz: This one got a vote, not all excited about it, but there was some ahh, we may be okay with that.

Commissioner Anderson: That was Biltmore II's choice, so that was an entire building, if you're going to analyze it.

Ms. DeZayas: When you say Biltmore II, I'm sorry.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's one of the buildings.

Commissioner Anderson: It's one of the buildings on the way.

Public Works Director Diaz: Mr. Morales, I think he was interested in the median, which is the next one that I'm...

Ms. DeZayas: Option 6.

Commissioner Anderson: They did mention Option 5, was it 5a or something, but it did have the bicycle infrastructure in it. I noticed because, I said, oh, somebody wants some of the bicycle infrastructure.

Ms. DeZayas: He had some comments about – it wasn't exactly Option 5; he had some comments on how he wanted it.

Public Works Director Diaz: The second option that got the most interest and by second, I mean far second was this option, and again, this is only west of Segovia. We will have to see to what extent you can really do a median there, because you got all those driveways coming through, but it will facilitate crossings.

Mayor Lago: What is that lane in the middle for?

Public Works Director Diaz: Well, you've got to have – you've got driveways, so people need to be able to come in and out. The details need to be worked out through a design. I don't want to call it the unofficial name.

Ms. DeZayas: What, the turning – coming out of the driveways.

Public Works Director Diaz: What do you call along the middle?

Commissioner Anderson: The turning lane.

Public Works Director Diaz: The unofficial name is a suicide lane but that's not...

Commissioner Menendez: We'll avoid that in the brochure.

Public Works Director Diaz: We won't put that in the brochure. It's a turning lane for cars who need to turn in and out of driveways.

Mayor Lago: Yes. It's to avoid having to do U-turns.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct. But again, the details as to where would that go, to what extent going to do a median, or maybe we can make a choice and restrict moments, and nobody can make a turn and all those things can be worked out through the process.

Mayor Lago: But there is no bike lane here, correct?

Public Works Director Diaz: No, there is no bike lane on this option. One thing to realize is that the David Williams has a garage that extends all the way to a certain line of Biltmore Way. Its relatively shallow, so basically there's very little we can do there, that's something that we will have to work to see whether we put planters...so that whole area there's some work there that needs to happen to see what is it that we can do. Obviously, we cannot dig a hole and plant a tree there. So that's something that needs...

Vice Mayor Mena: Isn't that similar to the issue we had over here on Minorca, where Bay 13 is, that Plaza Columbus.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. It is. It is.

Public Works Director Diaz: Under the Plaza.

Commissioner Anderson: Under the Plaza, yes.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right, but this is under the street.

Vice Mayor Mena: My point is, if you're going to plant trees then we have to use like turf.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Deena can put some nice native plants in there.

Commissioner Menendez: Could you go back to the picture with the underground parking.

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Public Works Director Diaz: There you go.

Commissioner Menendez: For those of you who have issues sometimes with decisions we make, that was probably early 1960's, maybe 50's.

Public Works Director Diaz: Thereabouts, yes, something like that.

Commissioner Menendez: So, the grass isn't always greener going back in time.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Menendez: Just want to point that out.

Commissioner Anderson: Certainly, wouldn't allow anything remotely even close to this. Do we have a timeline as to when we know what the weight bearing capacity of that parking garage is.

City Manager Iglesias: They are currently Commissioner, they are currently looking at that and our Building Official, Suramy Cabrera is handling that. They are doing an analysis on it. They've had some issues as to what loading they should be using, use...loading similar to a bridge because its right in the driveway, its right in the street and subject to really all kinds of traffic, similar to what a bridge would be.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. Right. Are we six months out, are we a year out?

City Manager Iglesias: I know there's been, I know because I've seen the e-mails, there's a lot of talk with our Building Official. They are getting engineers and now can look at the Astro product which is something different than buildings, and they are evaluating, they are providing an evaluation now.

Commissioner Anderson: Can you provide us your best educated guess as to how far out we are before we know what the load capacity is of that garage?

City Manager Iglesias: It's not in our hands. It's in the hands of the condo association. I can ask our Building Official is here, Suramy Cabrera can let us know. I haven't seen an e-mail for a few weeks, so I'm not sure where they're at right now.

Commissioner Anderson: Because that's going to hold up this project.

City Manager Iglesias: There was an issue as to what to use, once it's in the right-of-way and you have vehicle traffic, now you're in a separate building code, you're in national instead of the Florida Building Code.

Commissioner Anderson: Best educated guess as to how far along it will take to get some information on the load capacity, because it's going to hold up this whole Biltmore Way project.

Development Services Director Cabrera: So, I just communicated with them, I think it was the end of last week, that I'm giving them a deadline, because they've been giving me monthly reports

because there are a few items, not just this, but I don't have the final report from them. They had submitted something, we provided comments. I don't have a final answer in all honesty.

Commissioner Anderson: So, if you're trying to give Director Diaz some ideas as to more or less when he expects to have the information needed on load capacity, are we six months, a year out?

Development Services Director Cabrera: Oh, no, no. When I communicated by e-mail last week, I don't know if I gave them 30 days or I would escalate enforcement which means that I would, I don't want to get into it, but that I would take action so that they absolutely have to provide us something within 30-60 days.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Alright. It gives us some idea.

City Manager Iglesias: I think, Commissioner, that issue is interpreting what loads to use and again, that's not a building code issue, it's a national issue. You could have a fire truck, you could have anything pass by, and so it emulates more bridge really than a residential structure.

Mayor Lago: So now that we have the update, moving on what is the next step?

Public Works Director Diaz: What we need is direction. We have multiple options; we went to the community, the community mentioned which of the areas that is preferred. So, what we need is direction.

Mayor Lago: So, let me ask you a quick question. Do we have construction cost, ideas, budgets?

Public Works Director Diaz: No. Right now, we have like six different options. What we wanted to do is take this...

Mayor Lago: Pair it down.

Public Works Director Diaz: Exactly – pair it down to something more manageable, maybe a couple of options on each side. I will tell you that overwhelmingly though, the bike lanes were not well received at all. So, whether we still want to continue with one bicycle section, in addition with the one that doesn't have a bicycle section, and then pair them down that way. And then, obviously, we need to engage with the traffic, because we've got to come up with all those ideas, but if the county is not going to approve it because there are some volume issues, and there's only about \$90,000 or so left for funding in this, so we don't have a lot of money left for us to really continue; there's no money really left for design, so we have, I want to say about \$90-\$100,000 give or take available on this project.

Commissioner Anderson: In order to pair it down and if you pair down the need for the traffic study to just determination of whether its west of Biltmore Way versus east of Biltmore Way on traffic, so residents can make an intelligent choice on what they want there. If we just have those two issues looked at, would that bring the price tag down to the funds that we have left?

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely. I think we can probably bring it down. Looking at six different options is way too many. So, we can make a decision as to which options we are look

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forward, we might be able to negotiate at that price down where it may be manageable with that amount of money that we have left.

Commissioner Menendez: Going back to my earlier comment. Which are the two that had no support at the workshop. Remember they had zero.

Public Works Director Diaz: For the most part...

Ms. DeZayas: 2, 3, and 4, I think didn't have anything.

Commissioner Menendez: There were two of them that had, of all the tables you had, nobody mentioned those. So, I would just say from the start, you have two out and then you're left with three and we can come up with.

Public Works Director Diaz: The option that got the most – there was the first option which was pretty much the cheapest one, if that's the option we are going to go with, we don't even need a traffic study, because at that point it's just sidewalk and trees and we don't even need to involve the county altogether.

Commissioner Anderson: Then ballot it. I think we need to ballot it first, because if you're only taking ten percent of the people that reside there.

Public Works Director Diaz: Oh absolutely, probably not even.

Commissioner Anderson: In order to really have confirmation that that's what these folks want, we need to hear the voices of all. If they chose not to vote, they chose not to vote.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: Let's do this, because we have a lot of items to discuss. What is the will of the sponsor of the item?

Commissioner Anderson: Well, all I wanted to make sure is the traffic study got done so that people can make intelligent decisions, because there's always that view that the sky is falling, there's not going to be enough room for all the traffic; and if we were talking about going down to one lane east of Segovia, I would agree with you. I would agree with them, but on the west side of Segovia, from my observations, I don't think that the traffic study will show that the sky is going to fall.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct. And one of the things that on the east side of Segovia may be feasible subject to the data is that you have two lanes going, one lane going...

Ms. DeZayas: East of Segovia going into the circle.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right – westbound and then one lane. So that's something that it may be feasible, you've got Coral Way also.

Commissioner Anderson: Its already merged, its already merged there now.

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Mayor Lago: Commissioner if I may, just one second. I want to try to bring this in for a landing. Obviously, there's a lot of work to do, a lot of work to do. Do you want to have a Sunshine meeting so we can wrap this up and bring it to the Commission and do the will of the Commission moving forward, because it seems there's a lot of loose ends here. There are multiple designs, there's traffic studies, there's potentially dealing with the county, there's potentially budgets that need to be discussed, there's a lot of things that I don't think we are going to solve today here, and we could be going in circles for hours on this item.

Public Works Director Diaz: What we would like to have is direction where we can train those six options down to maybe a couple and then do one analysis on that.

Mayor Lago: I'm giving you an option.

Commissioner Anderson: I agree with that. And then on the Flagler Section, if we just want to put it on the next agenda.

Mayor Lago: No, no, no, we can talk about it right now, but let's bring it in for a landing.

Commissioner Menendez: Do you know which ones they are going to be, because I don't want to be Baskin Robins. Let's pick vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, let me just say that the different cross-sections we can come up with preliminary cost for each one.

Public Works Director Diaz: We can do that.

City Manager Iglesias: Some of those costs are quite expensive, there's been talk of signalization, which would be millions of dollars. So, it really depends on, I see this as some type of assessment district, because the costs are so high and what we have there is really not a technical issue. We could repave, restripe and it would be over. What we have is an aesthetic issue or a change issue. So, the budgets there are very important, so what we can do, I think at this point is bring back some budgetary numbers because I do think that there's a lot of alternatives there, and some of those alternatives are very costly.

Commissioner Anderson: Right.

Mayor Lago: With all due respect to everybody in the process, a lot of great work has been done here. This is a conversation to be had to update where we're at, but we've got to sit down, and we've got to workshop this. This is real, this is hours and hours of work that needs to be discussed here. This is not going to be resolved on the Commission. So, if you want to do this again on the Commission with an update on the cost of financially of the budget for the construction, we can do that, but I think that we need to sit down as a Commission and say, the budgets are as follows and have anybody show up from the community that likes to show up, they can have public comment. We need to have a workshop coming in and out of this.

City Manager Iglesias: I agree Mayor, and at that workshop we can have preliminary costs involved and I think there is enough information that we can have that workshop, along with a preliminary cost and see which way we go from that point, because right now there are too many options and right now the costs vary quite a bit, so I think that workshop is a good idea.

Mayor Lago: And then we can move to the balloting.

Commissioner Anderson: Then we can move to the ballot process. So, you circulate some dates when a proposed workshop, depending on when you can have the preliminary costs.

City Manager Iglesias: We can narrow it down then we can do a traffic study based on those alternatives which are based on accepted cost and accepted outcomes.

Mayor Lago: Do you want to discuss Flagler Section?

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes. Billy, Flagler Section. It's the other presentation.

Ms. DeZayas: So, this is the last presentation that was done for this project. It was a meeting that they had over Zoom, wasn't very well attended. These are the four meetings that we've had for this particular project. It was a walking tour, there was a hands-on design session, there was a neighborhood presentation and then there was a virtual meeting that was discussed. Basically, the steps that have been taken so far, three cross-sections were developed for this project; one of them is minimal intervention, which is basically detached bulb-outs. That has to be revised because we are looking at potentially moving forward with attached bulb-outs to give us more significant landscaping because the detached bulb-outs, given that we have 50-foot rights-of-way in most of these streets, it didn't give us much room for the trees that we were looking for. So that's got to be revised. There is the permanent rebuild which is Option 2, and then the change of character, which is Option 3. Change of character is basically the swales, that's what you see in most of the residential neighborhoods in Coral Gables. So, they came up with some order of magnitude, cost estimates. These were cost estimates that were developed in 2019, so it doesn't take account the escalation cost that we've been encountering with construction lately. So, for Option 1, it was about \$3.2 million dollars; Option 2 was the most significant one, it was \$7 million dollars; and then Option 3 was \$3.7 (million).

City Manager Iglesias: There is no escalation in those numbers. Those are 2019 numbers.

Ms. DeZayas: So, here's some renderings. You can see the neighborhood here outlined with the map. This does not include Ponce. This is just the residential streets that are adjacent to Ponce. And as you can see, Option 1 was for the bulb-outs; Option 2 was the more costly one; and Option 3 was the swales. These renderings will have to be revised based on...

Public Works Director Diaz: The changes to the cross-sections that we are going to be working on.

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Ms. DeZayas: So, moving forward. We basically have to establish the project criteria. We are going to have to revise the cross-sections and the renderings, update these cost estimates since the cost estimates are based off of the 2019 prices and don't reflect the current prices now in the market that we're dealing with. Have another engagement meeting and select a preferred cross-section. Once we do that, we'll have to identify a funding source for the project; finalize design which can start before we secure the construction funding, because there is money in this project. Depending on the option that's selected, if its Option 1 or Option 3, we might be able to start with design based on the funding that we have available and then moving forward with construction.

Commissioner Anderson: Some of the comments that I received from residents was that they did want Ponce included, that they liked the grassy swale option, which was Option 3, okay; and I think if we settle on a design with the neighborhood, we can work on the funding issues depending on what is going on there. There will be projects, and there have been projects that come in, that may be able to help contribute to defray some of the cost or may need to build that into their projects for the sections that they are involved in, and then the discussion with the residents, you know the timeline and the cost of this project.

Public Works Director Diaz: I was actually around in some of the early workshops that were part of this. One other feedback that we got from the neighbors was a concern about the loss of parking, but in this case its inevitable. You want trees, most of this is in the right-of-way. Most of them are 50-footer rights-of-way, there's a 60-foot right-of-way, and there's a couple of other areas that are a little larger, but for the most part these are 50-foot, slighter smaller than your typical right-of-way and most of Coral Gables with some exceptions, you've got 60-foot right-of-way, so this is only 50. So, there's going to have to be a give and take, right, so unfortunately that's – When we started this process in 2019, I think at the time the decision was to leave Ponce out of it, not because it wasn't necessary, but Ponce to itself is a very, very big job. There's a lot of things to consider. Its probably going to be rather expensive, depending on what we chose. I think we can move forward relatively quickly with another public meeting to have a discussion about the internal streets and work on Ponce and maybe have a follow-up meeting on Ponce, if you want to have this meeting sooner rather than later. Because there's a lot of work to be done – and when I mean Ponce, I don't mean Ponce also, but you've got Galiano, Anoviero, as it merges with Ponce. You kind of form that almost like an inverted Y. So that area needs to be looked at very carefully. Those are major thoroughfares.

Commissioner Anderson: I think the public meeting needs to be had and get direction from the neighborhood, Option A omit Ponce at this point, or Option B include it. Update your monetary numbers on there, whether its \$3.7 million now or \$7.8 million now and a rough timeline.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

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City Manager Iglesias: And Option 3, Commissioner, right now and as the Mayor knows, it will probably be over \$5 million dollars right now.

Commissioner Anderson: I understand.

City Manager Iglesias: On Option 3. Mayor, I think Option 3 you probably would agree would be over \$5 million now.

Mayor Lago: Easily.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes – easy. I agree as well.

City Manager Iglesias: The funding is quite a bit of money.

Commissioner Anderson: People need to know whether or not they want the standard or they want the Cadillac.

City Manager Iglesias: Either one of those options, as you can see is going to be over \$5 million, the \$7 million option is probably \$9 or \$9.5 (million). Mayor, what do you think, something around there.

Mayor Lago: I agree. The escalation is there, and the prices have not gone down, especially with labor.

City Manager Iglesias: So, we're talking about probably \$5-plus to \$9-plus million for all those options. So the funding is a major issue on this particular project.

Commissioner Anderson: The good news is they are already on sewer.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes, they are. I think we can work at the next Commission meeting for the interior streets, I think April is a good time for us to go, I think that will give us sufficient time to work through all these details and put together a presentation.

Commissioner Anderson: They are going to ask you about Ponce.

Public Works Director Diaz: They are.

Commissioner Anderson: So, you need to have some information for them.

Public Works Director Diaz: We can start the ball rolling on Ponce right away, and then, we can proffer that we're probably going to come back with some ideas on Ponce probably – the summer is not a good idea to have public meetings.

City Manager Iglesias: Ponce is a collector, so its something we have to look at carefully.

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Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Whether you do it in September or whatever.

Public Works Director Diaz: It would probably be the fall, by the time that we come back with Ponce. There are certain things that we can do with interior streets and one of the things that we were talking about, you have all these bump-outs, Ponce has that parking lane that is unprotected, so that will help somewhat, just kind of tunnelling the travel lanes, and that can be part of the interior work on the street as long as it doesn't conflict with something else we may want to do on Ponce, but I think that's how we will start. We start working on Ponce, but we'll have to go back to the community probably in the fall with some ideas about Ponce.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. That's at least some information.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely. And this project does have money for us to continue the process as far as conceptualizing and design and even if we need to do a traffic study, there is no money for design, unless we chose the minimal option. So we'll work that through as we move along, there's certainly the money for construction available on the budget right now for this project either.

Commissioner Anderson: Is there a need for a traffic study?

Public Works Director Diaz: For what, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Anderson: Is there a need for a traffic study here?

Public Works Director Diaz: It depends. What we've been discussing on the side streets, no. For Ponce, yes, we'll probably need to.

Commissioner Anderson: Alright.

Public Works Director Diaz: But whatever we're proposing putting planters and bump-outs, we don't need county permission to do that.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Ready to move forward. Any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Who is that?

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker is Mr. Bart Upthegrove.

Mr. Upthegrove: My name is Bart Upthegrove. Hello everybody, how are you. I've got a little tired and freezing. I live at 25 Veragua Avenue, its two streets north of S.W. 8th Street, and I was

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just listening to the gentleman speak, and as you know, it goes way before 2019, but let's just leave it in 2019. The biggest problem I see now in our neighborhood, aside from aesthetics is the speeding traffic, not only up and down Ponce, but on Veragua, since it's the second street north of 8th Street, they are flying through, trying to save time. My only thing is, is there any monies that can be appropriated, certainly Option 1, which you were just showing is probably the easiest and the least expensive and the...would be nice, but waiting another 2, 3, 4, 5 years, because I just witnessed an accident the other day on Ponce, a speeding car lost control, flew into the neighbor's front yard, almost hit the older gentleman who was out there working and I had just walked by there. It's a major problem, the traffic. The speeding is constant. I walk the neighborhood all the time. Pretty soon we have the Jackson Ambulatory Emergency Center opening, I'm for that, God forbid I have an ailment, its close by, but we don't even know the traffic that's going to generate, and people rushing coming and going from there for family members. Is there any way we can slow down the traffic almost immediately, even with something temporary – hard rubber strips down some of the streets until all these other things can be budgeted, designed. I don't know, something. You take your life in your hands when you walk in our neighborhood. When I try to cross the street, walking on Ponce to cross the street, people, forget stopping, then your crosswalk and then trying to get out to see with cars parked, they come right through the crosswalk up to the street. If I'm not paying attention or the sun's got to my head and I'm not thinking of looking and stopping, I've almost gotten run over a couple of times. So, I try to go slower, think whatever, I'm in pretty decent shape for my age. But if there is something you all can do to help with the speeding traffic immediately, something.

Commissioner Anderson: Mr. Manager, can you come back to us next Commission meeting with some information on that.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Mr. Upthegrove: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Next speaker.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Vicky Busot.

Unidentified Speaker: She had to leave.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay. Evelyn Diaz.

Ms. Diaz: Good afternoon, my name is Evelyn Diaz, I reside at...

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here. Thank you for your patience. I'm sorry it took so long.

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Ms. Diaz: Thank you. So, I've been a resident at 36 Montilla for the last 27 years. I'm here advocating for twelve streets; one which would be Ponce de Leon Boulevard, which is from S.W. 8th Street to Flagler. I'm also here for Oviedo, Veragua, Montilla, Acantarra, Barbella, Fonseca, Campina, Carmona, Avilla, and _____. We need something done. The traffic situation there is just horrible. There was a very bad accident on Monday, I was a witness to it. Someone could have gotten killed. One of the residents, even a property owner, I'm sure you all saw the video. We have been waiting for this since 2019, nothing has happened. I ask myself, why should I come here, one of my neighbors said. This was paradise 55 years ago when I bought my house, it's an older lady, she's 84, she lives on 30 Veragua. She said, you're wasting your time. I asked my husband, should I go? He goes, yes, go, because each and every person that is in front of you represent you, and you hold them accountable. So each and every one of you I'm holding accountable to please do something about our area. I do not want to be the next conscience of Flagler Section. So with all due respect, we've been waiting long enough. I understand there's protocols, but basically we are all tired of waiting. There's even a situation as you approach our area from Salamanca to S.W. 8th Street. Its like you're driving in a dirt road – all these patches. I understand that it has to do with FDOT, but it's been like that for many, many years, not sure if that's on anybody's radar. This is from Salamanca to S.W. 8th Street.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, are you aware of something that's happening on Salamanca or our Public Works Director, can you speak on that.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'm not aware of that, but I will look into it.

Mayor Lago: Please. Will you speak to the lady.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely. I'll give you my card on the way out and we can talk about it.

Ms. Diaz: I've spoken to various people in your department.

Mayor Lago: Who have you spoken with?

Ms. Diaz: Don't have her name. I didn't come very well prepared, but there is a problem, I mean, all of you must drive down Ponce as approaching 8th Street when you probably go to La Casita Restaurant, there is a problem on that street, its various streets.

Mayor Lago: What is the problem?

Ms. Diaz: There is patches everywhere. There's not even lines that divide Ponce.

Commissioner Anderson: Don't we have the median project proceeding there and its going to be breaking ground soon on Ponce.

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City Manager Iglesias: Its from 8th Street south.

Commissioner Anderson: Right – Salamanca is south of 8th Street.

Ms. Diaz: Salamanca’s work Tinti Café.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. There’s a light at that intersection.

Ms. Diaz: Correct – and there’s a Domino’s Pizza. From that point forward its like a dirt road. There is no lines and its just patch after patch after patch.

City Manager Iglesias: That project covers from the existing medians all the way to 8th Street, it finishes up on...

Mayor Lago: When is that area going to be redone?

Commissioner Anderson: That is being redone.

Mayor Lago: When does that start?

Public Works Director Diaz: So, we’re finalizing – there’s a water main project that we’re working that needs to be included and we are working that out with WASA.

Mayor Lago: I met with the developers of the project yesterday.

Public Works Director Diaz: Okay.

Mayor Lago: I walked the site.

Public Works Director Diaz: We’re talking about 1000 Ponce.

Mayor Lago: Yes. They are ready to start, supposedly they are commencing soon. The contractor is Winmar who is going to be doing that project. They were waiting for a few things that needed to be taken care of. In regards to that water line, the city is going to do a portion of the water line, correct?

Public Works Director Diaz: So we have a...with WASA and we’re trying to get that finalized, because they are paying for it and we’re going through, still have the final approval from WASA.

Mayor Lago: They told me it also deals with an issue of some state grant, correct, is it a state grant issue?

Public Works Director Diaz: No. No. We don’t have any grant.

Mayor Lago: What is the issue with WASA?

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Public Works Director Diaz: It's just a review.

City Manager Iglesias: I believe it's a state grant for the sanitary sewer.

Mayor Lago: For the sanitary sewer.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes, you're right. The state grant has to do a sanitary sewer.

Mayor Lago: What is the issue you are having with WASA?

Public Works Director Diaz: Its just getting the plans finalized and approved.

Mayor Lago: How long you've been waiting for that?

Public Works Director Diaz: It's been going back and forth.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, I need you to do me a favor. I need you to write me an e-mail, copy the Manager please, through the Manager's office, because you work for the Manager, and I need you to include Mr. Jose Enrique Cueto, I need you to include Kevin Cabrera, the Commissioner in the District and I need you to include the Mayor of the County. Say, we are waiting and explain, we are waiting to start improvement project that has taken five to ten years on Ponce. I know its been taking ten years, I've been talking about it for ten years and I've been here for almost ten years in April. I need you to please, we are ready to start, we are not asking the county for any money, we are going to take care of it. We are pending the following WASA approval, if you submitted everything, can you please help us with that. I will chime in, in an e-mail and I will beg our county staff and team for assistance, please. Can you get that done?

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Alright, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, I've talked to the developer about expediting it or we are going to proceed and they are going to have to repave.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor the next speaker is Ms. Zully Pardo.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Pardo, good afternoon.

Ms. Pardo: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, Commission, Mrs. Anderson. Thank you, thank you for moving forward with this project. I so appreciated you – I know that with Covid everything came to a dead halt and thanks to your efforts we're moving forward slowly but surely. I understand that we're looking at the side streets first, but if we could possibly look at Ponce; Ponce is a major, major issue for us. If we maybe have a plan or look at options where we might be able to add Ponce de Leon and Oviero, because now, we not only have – we have so much traffic from the

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medical buildings that are around, but we are going to add the Jackson facility, that's going to be a mess, that's how I see it. Its already busy and congested and people are zooming by. Not only that, add to that, the pedestrians that are visiting those buildings and they are constantly jay walking, constantly jay walking. They don't bother to go to the corner; and then, they go into the neighborhoods and they park, even with the postings of permit parking, you have cars parking in any residential street, even with the permits. So these are all issues that I know I'm just saying off the top of my head, but they are important issues that we need to look at when we look at our vision plan. I appreciate your time. I look forward to maybe a Sunshine meeting with the residents soon. I know Mr. Diaz says we are going to meet in May and maybe later on in September, so we're ready, we're ready to go, and discuss this further with you. But I really appreciate that we're moving forward, but if you could include Ponce in some way, at least to start, it would be great. Thank you for your time. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So, what is the next step? Ready to go? What do we do?

Public Works Director Diaz: The next step is community meeting.

Mayor Lago: When is it?

Public Works Director Diaz: Probably late April.

Mayor Lago: Why April?

Public Works Director Diaz: We need time to, if we're going to do it right, we need time to prepare.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Put on the Commission item, the first week in April, I want to see that there is, I want to have an update that we have a scheduled meeting, please.

City Clerk Urquia: We don't have Commission meetings in April sir.

Mayor Lago: Put it in the last week of March.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Mayor Lago: And we'll keep pushing. Put it in the last week of March, the last Commission meeting in March, I will sponsor an item that I want to see a date for a Commission, excuse me, for a community meeting for the section of Flagler, please, scheduled for April, okay.

Vice Mayor Mena: Why don't we schedule it now?

Mayor Lago: I don't want to push staff.

Vice Mayor Mena: We can do it later.

Mayor Lago: I want to make sure it's done.

Public Works Director Diaz: We work with a consultant, we need to figure it out, holidays and you know.

Mayor Lago: I've got to make sure it gets done. I got to make sure it gets done. Alright. Thank you.

Public Works Director Diaz: No. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.