

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
JUNE 17, 2008

	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
MEMBERS:												
Ian Martinez	-	P	P	P	E	*	E	P	P	P	P	P
Larry D. Kries	P	P	E	E	P	*	P	P	P	P	P	P
Douglas Yoder	E	P	P	P	P	*	P	E	E	P	P	P
Frank Quesada	-	P	P	E	P	*	P	P	E	P	A	E
Christopher Morrison	P	P	P	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	E	P
Bertram Goldsmith, Jr.	P	P	P	P	E	*	P	P	P	E	P	P
Ramon Irigoyen	E	A	A	A	A	*	P	P	P	A	A	E

APPOINTED BY:

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

(*) Board recommended not holding a meeting due to holiday vacations

A - Absent
E - Excused
P - Present

STAFF

R. Alberto Delgado, P.E., Public Works Director
Esther Zabalo, Civil Engineer
Scott Masington, Major, Police Department
Tom Carrigan, Police Department
Marc Stolzenberg, Deputy Fire Chief
Capt. John Curry, Fire Department
M. Francomacaro, Central

Guests:

Mrs. Luisa C. Mendoza, 740 South Alhambra Circle, CG 33146
Fernando Menoyo, 744 Biltmore Way, CG 33134
Chip Jorge, 5900 Cellini Street, CG 33146
Wendy Cook, Le Jeune/Segovia Neighborhood Association
Rhonda Anderson, Le Jeune/Segovia Neighborhood Association
Jose M. Gonzalez, Vice-President, Flagler Development Group

Consultants:

Hesham Elbadrawi, Marlin Engineering Consultants
Yamilet Senespleda, Marlin Engineering Consultants
Timothy Plummer, David Plummer & Associates, Inc.

Chairman Morrison called the meeting to order at 5:31. Copies of the minutes of May 20, 2008 were distributed. Upon motion made by Ian Martinez, seconded by Chico Goldsmith the Minutes were approved. Both Mr. Irigoyen and Mr. Quesada's absences were excused. The chairman reiterated that requests to be excused should be made prior to the meeting so that they can be approved at the meeting.

The Chairman asked Mr. Delgado if he wanted to take any agenda items out of order. Mr. Delgado noted that he was going to be very brief so the time could be used by the consultant (Tim Plummer) to make his presentation.

Mr. Delgado referred to the letter received from Esther Calas, Miami-Dade County Public Works Director, indicating that the County had finally authorized the use of Impact Fees for the Segovia Median. It means that Public Works must start the extensive process. The first thing the County wants us to provide an up-to-date estimate. Next week are meeting with the County's Impact Fees staff to include this project in this year's schedule. The County needs to amend the PIP Program so that this project will be incorporated into this year, and then start the Joint Participation Agreement process, which usually takes six months.

In the meantime we will finalize the design, which is about 95% complete (we have already received the County's comments); sign the JPA and then begin the bidding process. That usually takes a year, but hopefully we will try to expedite it, but my guess is that it will take a year before we can start construction. This project involves the creation of a nice median with a bicycle lane which will go from Valencia, one block north from Biltmore Way all the way to Bird Road, which will connect the bicycle path from Bird Road all the way to Alhambra Circle.

The Segovia/Coral Way roundabout is coming before the City Commission on the 26th to award the bid. The County reviewed and approved the bids. Once we get Commission approval, we can start construction in July.

Another project that is coming before the City Commission, even though it is not a traffic project, is the Country Club Prado entrance restoration. Everyone has been very interested in this project.

Mr. Delgado noted that we were right on target with the other projects. The one circle at Bella Vista is 50% complete. Once the residents see the complete installation, and it meets their approval, we will continue with construction of the other circles.

Burger King then/Bacardi project now: Mr. Delgado announced that Tim Plummer, David Plummer & Associates, Inc. will be making a presentation of Phase II of this project. Phase 1 was completed, which consisted of the circles that were installed along Hernando, and modifications on Valencia. Now the two alternatives for Phase II, which considers the intersections at Le Jeune Road and at Segovia Street, will be discussed.

The presentation is necessary so that we can make a determination as to what will be the next step and whether it will be brought back to the neighbors for a vote, and we will need input from the Police and Fire Departments as to the impact on their ability to move through the neighborhood. Comments from our emergency departments are paramount before we proceed.

Jose Gonzalez (Vice-President, Flagler Development Group): He explained that the original deal was with Burger King, but they dropped out of the deal and Bacardi was in the market and took over the project, which changed the timing a little bit. The shell of the building was completed by

the end of the year, but the interiors which would ultimately drive the traffic, will not be completed until the middle of next year, which gives us a little bit of more time to work with the neighbors as far as getting their votes and a consensus from the neighborhood as what they want for Phase II.

Mr. Gonzalez gave a brief overview of Phase I, which consisted of the traffic circles up and down Hernando. That was completed. Part of Phase I was obtaining the approval for the Segovia median funding and this was also accomplished. He further noted that the plan for Phase II is more restrictive. There are two options and Flagler Development Group is committed to funding either option. We want to take care of everything when the contractor is still on the job and the money is available to do the work. When the building is complete and Bacardi Headquarters moves in, they need to have all the funds allocated. Tim Plummer will go into details on the two options for Phase II.

Tim Plummer: “Let me start with why are we here. We are here for two reasons: One to come before this Board and to update Police and Fire on where the project is at from a traffic stand point. And the second reason we are here is to present two alternatives for the Le Jeune/Segovia project for your consideration”. He introduced Ms. Wendy Cook and Ms. Rhonda Anderson, the representatives of the Le Jeune /Segovia Neighborhood Association.

Ms. Anderson indicated that they wanted to get the rulings from the Traffic Advisory Board, the Police and the Fire Departments, and FDOT (because it involved Le Jeune Road), before presenting it for a neighborhood vote. They do not want to go for a vote and then find out that the Traffic Advisory Board, the Police and/or Fire Department does not approve the design.

FLAGLER DEVELOPMENT-TRAFFIC UPDATE: Tim Plummer pointed to a display board, to show the physical location of Bacardi headquarters, on Sevilla and Almeria; City National Bank Building and Flagler Development headquarters are on the south side of Sevilla. Phase I, consisting of the four traffic circles, has been completed and operational for about a month or two. The second Phase of the traffic calming plan, which we discussed with the Le Jeune/Segovia project about a year or so ago, involved a couple of more issues and such as trying to prevent cut thru traffic, coming West to East in the morning and East to West in the afternoon. What happens is that the morning traffic from the west comes straight across, either across thru Palermo, Sevilla, Almeria, from the west to get to Le Jeune or Sevilla, thru Almeria, and then make a right turn on Le Jeune to turn left to go east. The streets do not line up so they can't go straight thru. In the afternoon its the reverse, people are traveling west on Palermo, Sevilla, or Catalonia, to turn right turn on Le Jeune and then go north and a left turn to go west. We identified that as an existing problem.

Mr. Plummer continued: “We had community meetings and we gave them some alternatives basically this is where we are at. Two different alternatives are being contemplating. Let me start with Le Jeune. The first one on Le Jeune looks to prevent right hand turns from Almeria, Sevilla, Palermo, and Catalonia. Basically what this will do is in the afternoon, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., is to prohibit the northbound to westbound left turn which is the problem we are having now from the CBD.”

“Then in the mornings the problem is on Segovia. A raised island there will allow right turns in and out from Segovia to Catalonia, Sevilla, and Palermo. East bound on Catalonia, Sevilla Palermo, etc. you will have to go either left or right, never straight, but we have to supplement that so we would not have that same problem in the morning, they will come west to east, will turn left and then turn right and continue to cut through. We will also have turn prohibition signs from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to prevent that.”

“Those are the two major parts of this. Also on Valencia, raised center islands will be installed on the blocks between Le Jeune and Hernando, Hernando and Segovia. Remove parking spaces on either side, to kind of narrow that street down a little bit to help with the speeding. Same thing on Catalonia, one block east of Le Jeune there is a lot of pavement, very wide. We’re thinking of placing a center median and kind of bulbing out from the sidewalk, as well as to narrow that down. That is the first alternative.”

“The second alternative is exactly the same except for one key component and that is that at Almeria, Sevilla, Palermo, Catalonia, instead of the turn restrictions from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. put in one-way street semi-diverters basically taking that section of Catalonia, Palermo, Sevilla and Almeria making it one-way only east bound for a short section. We have that in some other sections of the City, Biltmore Way if you are heading west if you get by David Williams Hotel and Biltmore Two as it curves towards the Venetian Pool, which used to be a two-way street. They put more grass and its one way eastbound. So this would be is a similar concept to that, very similar to the approach that was done in front of the Youth Center. One way eastbound going to University. Used to be two ways and when the Jaycee Project came on line they made it one way with a diverter just to prevent cut through traffic. So it has already been done in a couple of places in the City. This will be landscaped. Probably part of it would have to be landscaped because Le Jeune Road is curved. The design has not been worked out, but we need to get FDOT involved on this.”

“Those are the two options that the Le Jeune/Segovia Neighborhood Association is considering at this point.”

Mr. Martinez: “Point of information: Has this been discussed with the Fire Department?” Tim Plummer: “That is why we are here.”

Mr. Goldsmith: “On the four circles that have been installed, will that have any dampening on the cut through?”

Tim Plummer: “We have not done any after measurements yet because we do not know if there is going to be a Phase II yet, but traffic circles in essence don’t really necessarily prevent cut through, they help out just a little bit.”

Rhonda Anderson: “I have not seen a decrease in traffic, but I have seen a decrease in speed.”

Tim Plummer introduced Rhonda Anderson and Wendy Cook and invited them to make a statement as to where they stand on the alternatives, as to which one they want to move forward with and so forth.

Rhonda Anderson: “Could you explain the implementation of the traffic light. We missed that.”

Tim Plummer: “That is happening already. A traffic signal is coming on Sevilla and Le Jeune Road on the east leg. It is in permitting now in Miami and we expect to get a permit from FDOT in four weeks. That signal will be installed and with that signal for Sevilla, only, there is going to be a NO RIGHT TURN SIGN on Sevilla, because signals tend to attract traffic. This will relieve a little of the problem here for people that want to go southbound, so we will get more traffic on Sevilla. The concern was that people would come and use the signal and this is where the entrance and exit point is for the Bacardi headquarters and they will turn south on Sevilla. On Le Jeune there will be a sign to prevent westbound traffic 24/7, so that is part of the permitting process with that signal. That also means that when you go southbound on Sevilla you cannot turn west on Sevilla. Because as we discussed there will be more traffic here because of the signal. That is the problem they have today, but in reverse.”

Mr. Morrison questioned as to the County preferring signage before going to diverters. Isn't it likely that the County wants us to use signage before you go to diverters?

“The way the process works is - they (the County) wants you to go from least restrictive to more restrictive calming device to see if it resolves the problem. If it does not, you go to a more restrictive method; and if it doesn't work you go to yet a more restrictive method. Jumping right to the one-way street semi-diverter from the signage is something I don't think the County is going to necessarily look favorably on, but we have not approached them yet about the process.”

Both Ms. Wendy Cook and Ms. Rhonda Anderson noted that they had met with the County, the County Commissioner and also did some extensive research into what counties ordinances and there is nothing in place whatsoever that requires signage first and then semi-diverters, so they are willing to put up to a vote to the County to make that decision, but historically signage doesn't work and it puts more of a burden on the Police Department, which will have to enforce the signage. If you can come up with something that does not impede the Police and Fire departments to get through the neighborhood, we need to do so. Whether grass or shrubbery or trees like you did on Sevilla and Biltmore Way, it will eventually work.

Dr. Yoder: “Where is the traffic that had previously been going through the neighborhood being diverted with the semi-diverters? The idea is to have the traffic use the collectors and not cut-thru on the residential streets.”

Mr. Goldsmith: “We are going to need some input from the Fire Department on this, your criteria?”

Deputy Fire Chief Stolzenberg: “The sole purpose of the restrictions is what actually creates a problem for the Fire Department’s response. Any type of forced diversion which limits our access is obviously something that we are not in favor of. The idea of the signage and enforcement keeps the options open on our behalf to allow our response to go through, especially with the five or six block dimension that we are looking at here. Our options are limited by the use of diverters vs. signage. If there are incidents in the middle of the street, we basically would have to go around a 12-block radius which would delay or prohibit our response to where we have to go. Based on that we are not really in favor of anything that is going to stop us from where we need to go. The signage is obviously something that we would be in favor of.”

“Before this becomes an issue, we would not allow that. That is where we are at. Any impedance on traffic is impedance on us, which has a negative aspect.”

Mr. Morrison: “Can you address these proposals in light of the fact that the main fire station is in the midst of these proposed changes to existing traffic patterns.

Fire/Police: Our station is now behind where all this activity is taking place. Most of our direction is to the west side of the city, going thru to some portions of that area.

Mr. Kries asked which streets would the fire department normally go down to respond to an incident and Deputy Fire Chief Stolzenberg noted that it depends on where the incident is. Mr. Kries mentioned that he lives on Catalonia and admittedly has a vested interest, but he has never seen the fire vehicles come down that way. “That is why I am trying to understand would this really impact you or are you saying that ideally you do not want to make any changes to the existing traffic patterns?”

Deputy Fire Chief Stolzenberg: “Any impact on us is when an emergency rises, but saying that we do not go down the street, maybe there was not an emergency there during the time that someone was there to see us. Chances are what we play our cards on, and any impedance to your house for that type of situations, creates our problems. And that is the point that I am trying to make from our prospective.”

Ms. Anderson: “What we are trying to reach is a happy medium to where perhaps something could be solved, say by the use of grass or curbing. Of course, I cannot control FDOT, they say this has to be done, but perhaps if this could be designed so, again it does not interfere with your fire trucks. If we can get the fire trucks typically to access these streets from this direction (pointing to the board), there is plenty of width here which the fire trucks can make it through and it shouldn’t impede your trucks from getting through”. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Kries: “What you are saying, is that this design will not prevent the vehicle from using the road if you leave space (not paved but you have space.)”

Mr. Morrison: “Let me ask Hesham our traffic engineer. Can you foresee any way of designing this that would not inhibit emergency vehicles? Hesham: Pointing to the board, explained that the first design would be better than the other in defeating the traffic, especially if they are coming from the north, as they would not be able to make a right turn. This design without having the curvature here would be better. The medical response would be better and to put up signs. Fourteen feet would be provided. And also you need that because if a car breaks down here, (pointing to the board) you have enough space.” Discussion ensued.

Dr. Elbadrawi continued: (Again pointing to the board) “Any car can pull along here so we don’t care for this portion. And cars will jam. 14’ provides more space for cars. And also if a car broke down here, you need to have more space. The pavement should be 14’ wide. 14” for local streets is fine.”

Mr. Menoyo: “We are property owners in that area and from the beginning I attended these meetings with Codina we had proposed that the money for the second phase be used for a more holistic approach which is the roundabout at Coral Way and Segovia. That roundabout on Biltmore Way and Segovia would work perfectly with that one that will be implemented this year. It is necessary to drive traffic thru Coral Way and Biltmore Way down to the artery west. So we have been proposing the money be used for the roundabout and also for the completion of the Segovia Median. We feel that that is a more holistic approach. We feel that there is going to be opposition from streets like Malaga, like Santander. The residents will close this project. We are also opposed to the proliferation of signage. There are going to be signs if these approaches are implemented, there are going to be signs on Le Jeune all over the place, on Segovia, all over the place and we are not in favor of a solution that is not holistic and involves so much signage. We are going to oppose this proposal.”

Mr. Morrison asked to hear from the Police Department.

Major Scott Masington (Division Commander Special Enforcement):

His department is in charge of traffic investigations and traffic enforcement (motorcycle unit) among others.

“These types of issues come my way quite frequently and I have noticed over the years a change in some of the concerns of the residents because of population change and, certainly, we now have growth in the downtown district of Coral Gables and change in traffic patterns, so some of our concerns are changing. What we have now are narrow, tree lined streets that are being used as regular commuting traffic roadways which certainly is what concerns everybody. We have to look at things in the worst case scenario.”

“Our job, unfortunately, is what the situation is. Maybe once, maybe only once, but maybe in the opinion of the residents – “Well maybe it may never happen. I don’t go to bed every night afraid my house is going to burn down so I don’t sleep at night.” But at the Police Department we have to look at the one time when something happens.”

(Pointing to the Board) “These curves, one way street semi-diverters, our concern is if a police car was on Le Jeune Road and needed to go west on Palermo, to a house two or three houses off of Le Jeune Road because little Johnny was choking on a gum ball, every second matters. If you had one car that was in the one lane that was being respectful of the police car and stopped, now there is nowhere for that police car to go, that police car would have to go another block or two, north or south, to go around to Hernando, and around a couple of circles to reach a house that was almost a stone throw initially. This is the mind set that we are in. So it deals with life and death situations when we approach this.”

“If an officer or two are at a call, another example, and we can use a residential burglary which is a fairly common call for police, but as it turns into something more dramatic than just a false alarm and one of the policemen asks for assistance, that delays our response to those people, as well. So that is how we look at these things.”

“So if we start to create physical barriers, we are much more reluctant to support physical barriers. The flip side is talking about signage. I don’t know that I look at it thru the same aspects. Certainly, it has a negative effect on the beauty of our environment, to put up signs after signs, after signs, block, after block. After a while drivers start ignoring the signs and it becomes an enforcement issue and then our department is the one enforcing them. It is a balance: what can we do to get voluntary compliance from people? Because until we get voluntary compliance from the drivers we don’t really make much headway. So on the Le Jeune Road side we are reluctant to build physical barriers which will preclude cars and rescue trucks from getting through. (Pointing to the board) On the Segovia side, one thought is to wait till the Median Project is completed and see how we benefit from that before we put in the restrictive signs only allowing right turns. To me, the majority will not be able to do that, anyway. This may change the time frame of many things that you have talked a bout, but we may have accomplished that goal without building the restrictions at each block. So these are some of the concerns that we have.”

“These are our thought processes and I would encourage the group sometimes less is more. Maybe we should approach this as doing the least restrictive things first and then taking the next step down the road.”

Mr. Kries: "Is the Segovia median proposal going to close any streets?" It is not going to affect any of the east/west traffic? No.

Ms. Anderson: “There was a meeting at the City National Bank. All the neighbors from the Biltmore Way area all the way down to the Youth Center were invited and were handed flyers. In that flyer there were strong hints about semi-diverters and people were able to give us some comments, feedback, which was what we really wanted and that included the neighbors in the apartments on the corners there (pointing to the board), as well as the people that felt they were not benefiting of traffic calming because diverters were not included in their blocks. The closer to the Youth Center, like quite frankly, right now, the traffic flow does not exist there. By and large everybody wanted some kind of physical barrier or grass and we certainly do not want to ignore their comments. That is what the people wanted then. More recently

we have heard some complaints from some of the streets closest to the Youth Center because they feel that the traffic is going to be diverted onto their blocks. But there is something in the agreement that requires a traffic study to be done after implementation of these diverters so that if the traffic does rise above the probability level that additional traffic calming, whatever is deemed appropriate, will be done at that time. So yes we hear a division of opinion from the Biltmore Way to the Youth Center, but it appears that the division now is not the concern of one more car on my block as opposed to the streets that have historically suffered with traffic that has increased over the past 20 years beyond the ability to stand it so something needs to be done.”

Ms. Cook: “I have one more comment in reference to the safety issue. We do have a big safety issue with the traffic. I live on the 400 block of Almeria and there are six children who cannot go out between 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. They just can’t. I cannot let my son go out there because there is too much traffic. That is a greater concern more so than having the police cars take a few extra seconds. More likely to have an incident with a child, especially now having children going to the Youth Center from our streets and that was a big concern with everyone in the neighborhood. Our concern is that we have had traffic before. It is very hard to balance a residential community with this big downtown but we are trying to do that where the residents can be happy and the business people can still get to the main arteries and get out of town.”

“We came up with a lot of proposals and Tim has been extremely helpful in doing so but this is the one that we get the most agreement from most of the neighbors. And we only need 2/3’s and we think at this point we easily have 2/3’s of the impacted area.”

Mr. Morrison: “It’s important that you clearly understand what the procedures are of this committee which has been in existence now for about three years. Any time that there is a need within the community, the residents can come before us and ask for traffic calming measures. We send our consultant out to see what might be done, and generally he then comes up with several different proposals; we run them by the Police Department, we run them by the Fire Department, we run them by the County, we spend some money on design, which maybe wasted if we decide to do nothing, but we need to do that before we can move forward and then, most importantly, we have a community meeting. And that community meeting is not of the impacted area but the entire affected area, which is by County definition.”

“And, as we most recently learned during the Hammock Lakes issue, that when we have a community meeting it must include an even larger area if there is a chance that other residents who may be affected. We were criticized by the City Commission in the Hammocks Lakes issue not going far enough and wide enough in establishing the affected area. Although we had no one complain about the project from outside the Hammock Lakes neighborhood at our community meeting in January, by the time the Commission met two months later there were a large number of people present from a wider area that were upset about it. So that is our procedure.”

“We asked for this meeting today to get some input, because even though we have an established procedure, this one project which just seems to have had a life of its own and has gone around this committee. Consequently, this committee has been really kind of flying in the dark for some time.

So that is why we asked for the meeting today to see exactly what is planned for Phase II. I would suggest, to move this forward, you will all have to decide as an association which option you can get a majority of the residents in favor of and therefore which design you are going to go with. Then we will have our community meeting of the affected area so we can get input from anybody and everybody so we can make a recommendation to the Commission, which is our responsibility. We make recommendations to the Commission.”

Mr. Goldsmith: “At the same time we need the recommendation from the Fire and Police Departments. Your 2/3’s or whatever, you agree or do not agree, and go from there, also.”

Ms. Anderson: “What we have gone thru is present to this community what is palatable for both.”

Ms. Cook: “We did come before this board about two years ago and I came with my neighbor and we spoke about it. It is a wonderful opportunity by using tax payer monies to have traffic calming in a neighborhood that really needs it, I mean, it’s critical. The streets are unlivable, by definition not only for Coral Gables but for the County. It is truly an opportunity. Pursuant to the traffic study, it is really an opportunity to work with the developer who has been working very closely with all the residents, so that we can exist together and it would be shame to lose that opportunity to better this area when we have this available funding.”

Mr. Morrison: “I am sure that something is going to be done here. Our question is what? And who is going to be affected and that’s what we will determine as we move forward.”

Mr. Goldsmith: “I know we need some kind of traffic calming there, but we have to determine what the best as far as rescue...is I understand that, but we just have to get everybody together.”

Mr. Morrison asked for comments from Mr. Kries:

Mr. Kries: “First I would agree and obviously I would be the first to admit I have a vested interest in this thing but at the same time I think it is important that at least two thirds of the residents that live in the area that has been defined, need to agree on a plan; that the Fire and Police need to sign off on it, but I think the bigger issue, quite frankly, is going to be your neighbors on Malaga and Santander. I am just predicting that is going to be an issue, because we do need to take into consideration their concerns. Also, I think there is a lot of interest there because everyone wants to do the same thing: to eliminate as much traffic as possible cutting thru, right, but do it in such a way that doesn’t negatively impact other people. It is not an easy challenge, I agree. I wish I had a magic answer. Personally speaking, I would probably do the most radical thing you could do, but I know that that’s not going to go.” Discussion ensued.

Major Masington: When they talk about semi-diverters, are there sidewalks with handicap ramps that would have to be incorporated into that.” Dr. Elbadrawi: “Yes.”

Tim Plummer: (Pointing to the board) “That is why I mentioned we had to get with DOT on this. It sounds great. We are going to have to curve that for ADA standards for the handicapped ramp that would come across this. That’s my understanding my feeling is from Ms. Anderson’s standpoint this is going to be curved till at least somewhere around here and the sidewalk would have to be extended.”

Ms. Anderson asked how much space do the rescue vehicles need and Major Masington noted that it was not that easy. The vehicles are like 80 feet long and take a football field to move them through. It is hard enough as it is and that is why the police are opposed to those chokers.

Dr. Elbadrawi suggested if we can have right-in right-out diverters the same as we have on Segovia (pointing to the Board) with restrictions, because we already have turn around restrictions signs in here so people do not make a left turn and the same here. So we need to have this done right, with time restrictions.

Mr. Morrison asked if a hook and ladder could roll over the diverter.

Dr. Elbadrawi: “The splitters would be mounted to the curb, so any vehicles coming from the south you can still mount and emergency vehicles can mount both.” Discussion ensued.

Deputy Fire Chief Stolzenberg gave an example “when you have an immobilized patient strapped in the back of the vehicle and you don’t want him to move, you have a broken rib or any other injury any type of bouncing or swaying the back of the truck can cause further injury. Most of the times on a pick-up we might be able to follow a route a bit better, but a quick route to the get to the hospital happens to be Le Jeune Road. Mountable curves they slow down your response and if you look at all the traffic circles from Le Jeune Road to Segovia you hit three right away. Our response, again, slows down every time you put a physical barrier.”

“When you are talking about grass there may be a possibility that something might be able to be worked out. But, the main thing with the grass, a maintained grass like a golf course, is that vehicles could still go over it. I know you would like us to find a happy medium to accomplish these things and want us to look at different options. But, if the design inhibits are vehicles, this is something we are never going to be in favor of. I totally understand your position and what you are saying. What can we do, let’s find something and that is what I’m thinking. But, when you present that curve again, that presents another obstacle, but maybe it needs to be considered.”

“When the circles went in most of us assumed that the County would have the sidewalks close to the intersection, but in reality, because they prefer sidewalks away from the intersections, could they require to have crosswalks but eliminate the curb?”

Tim Plummer: “They do those in traffic circles and roundabouts, those you control, but for stop sign control they want the crosswalk to go in front of the stop sign.”

Mr. Goldsmith asked if in an emergency situation could the crosswalk be moved? Is that possible?

Mr. Plummer informed him that anything is possible, but getting the County to permit something like that when they haven't done it anywhere else, is a very difficult machine to move other there. If it is possible, yes, everything is possible.

Dr. Elbadrawi: "The traffic circle is a physical obstacle that you can see but with stop signs you know that in a couple of years a tree will grow and you can't see the stop sign anymore. But, you have a pedestrian crossing. You can't do that. Traffic circles are in the Federal Highway Guidelines, and Roundabout Guidelines, but for a pedestrian crossing in front of a stop sign, they cannot get around."

Mr. Morrison commented that this was a fact finding meeting and asked for any more comments.

Ms. Cook: "The streets that may feel left out have been included in our agreement. Just to give you a little historical background of what happened. We drafted the agreement, we reached the agreement with the developer, it allowed for a traffic study and the traffic study determined that certain streets were unlivable. Those streets get traffic calming funded by the developer; those streets that were not unlivable that did not have the traffic count, did not get traffic calming, but we have a provision that if it turns out that they suffer a burden because of our traffic calming, that there will be a follow-up and that is in our agreement."

Mr. Kris emphasized that this was an important point and to make sure that those neighbors knew that.

Ms. Cook noted that they had talked about it, but they need to have another meeting.

Mr. Morrison encouraged Ms. Cook and Ms. Anderson to meet with those neighbors as Mr. Diaz had suggested at the very beginning of our meeting. There is that infinite amount of time when the contractor is still on the job and the money is available to do the work. At this point, and after all the years that you have been working on this, it is time to move and reach a decision that is going to encompass the most people favorably.

Ms. Anderson again noted that they need to get final input from the Police and Fire Departments so that they can get together with the neighbors.

Mr. Goldsmith noted that both Police and Fire needed to review the information they had just received and review the suggestions discussed at this meeting.

Mr. Martinez suggested that we ask both the Police and Fire Department meet and discuss what was presented tonight and come back with their recommendations.

Major Masington suggested that Fire, Police and Mr. Delgado may collectively come up with an idea that may be favorable to all and that has not been thought of yet.

After discussion it was agreed that the report from the Police and Fire Departments will be presented at the July meeting of the Board.

Ms. Anderson inquired as to any barriers that they could look at vs. traffic calming, that the Police and Fire would approve of, that would beautify and at the same time work as traffic calming devices that may be acceptable.

Major Masington noted that is hard to compare one environment to another. "The City has done many things over the years and we do realize that there is always the unknown. He also noted that we are caught in this situation, which may create another situation in another place. He mentioned that a few years back the City closed a lot of roadways along Red Road and Eight Street and we all know that that created other concerns in the end. The circle by University of Miami, on San Amaro, also created unanticipated consequences. Effective in one sense, but the Police officers write a lot of traffic tickets at 3:00 in the morning. That is why he is reluctant to move an idea to change an environment – it does not always work."

Mr. Morrison wants to get the County involved in this thirty day process, because we have had other projects that the Police and Fire have had their say and the eleventh hour the County has decided a preference of one over the other.

Mr. Delgado noted that the County requires us to get permission from both the Police and Fire Department, recommendation from the consultant and then obtain 2/3's of the affected area residents. Once we meet these criteria, then the Count will go along with the recommended traffic calming device.

Mr. Morrison: "Are you sure of that even if the one that is recommended is the one least liked by the County?"

Mr. Delgado noted that the County had already cleared that.

Mr. Morrison: "I don't want to go forward and find four months from now the County says no."

Mr. Delgado reiterated that we have to meet those criteria. "We also need to go to the Department of Transportation, but his experience has been that with the DOT is that they will go along with anything that will avoid friction along a corridor. They went along with the traffic closures at Vilabella, Cadagua and Alminar by le Jeune Road. They are interested in the flow of traffic with the least friction and he believes that DOT will go along 99% with anything that is done along those intersections. However, we are more concerned with the Police and Fire Departments and the neighbors in the area are going to be changing the way they leave their homes and come back. That is why the 2/3 is not that easy to obtain. That is why I keep telling everyone, some neighbors will say no because they would have to go and come home a different way."

Mr. Martinez made the following motion:

That the Fire Department, Police Department come back with their recommendation to this Board, taking into consideration the worst case scenario which might require assistance from Metro-Dade for an emergency situation, to insure such help is not delayed due to the traffic calming devices.

Mr. Goldsmith seconded, motion carried.

Mr. Morrison thanked everyone for coming and asked Mr. Delgado if he had anything further. Mr. Delgado noted that Ms. Mendoza was attending the meeting and asked her if she had any comments.

Mrs. Mendoza, resident of 740 S. Alhambra Circle:

Mr. Goldsmith noted that he had gone to Mrs. Mendoza's house and cars are indeed speeding. He then turned the floor to Mrs. Mendoza, but first Dr. Elbadrawi wanted to provide his comments.

Dr. Elbadrawi, addressing those present, explained that they had been looking at that area for a long time to install circles on Granada and S. Alhambra and on Granada and Alfonso. Of the three major bridges, the City has finished installing two, but not at this location. He continued that at a certain point we need to go back to that location, especially with cars coming south up the bridge making a right turn into S. Alhambra. To Mr. Goldsmith's asked if there had not been something planned previously. Dr. Elbadrawi said that there had, but at that point in time it was not felt that we could afford to install the two circles, so a small circle at S. Alhambra and Veronese was designed with a reconstruction of the whole intersection but the residents did not like it.

Mrs. Mendoza noted that most residents were in agreement but another resident who was opposed to the project because it would be in front of his house told the neighbors that in order to do that, the beautiful oak tree that is in the green area would have to be taken down. He then was able to get a lot of the neighbors to reverse their original yes votes.

Mr. Morrison noted that he was very familiar with that. Mr. Goldsmith also commented that the fact that they claimed that the tree was going to be removed was what really drove the neighbors to reverse their votes.

Mrs. Mendoza reiterated what she had discussed at the May meeting for the Board that she had gone along with the Riviera Neighborhood Association on several occasions, and herself independently, with letters that she had gotten from Mr. Delgado and was able to obtain the signatures of a lot of the residents. She showed the drawing and explained things to the residents and quite a lot of people agreed to it. There is one particular neighbor whose house, (she fully understands and I emphasizes with him) doesn't want that design because it would put all the traffic going towards Granada in front of his house. Some went around to the neighbors and told them that the tree was going to be cut down, but not only that, they also went to 19 other neighbors who were

not on the original vote tally. On top of the list was the name of the neighbor who killed our dog when speeding two years ago.

Her children are now 13 and almost 15 years of age and know not to run into the middle of the street. One of her children has already started driving, so they are very aware of the traffic issue. There are also a lot of small children within those two blocks and what happened to their dog was a very traumatic experience for her family. If it had not been for the fact she screamed for her daughter to stop, it could have also been her daughter's life that was taken.

Mrs. Mendoza's house is on the corner of Altamira and S. Alhambra. Mr. Goldsmith noted that there are a lot of people "flying" over the Granada bridge, making the right turn onto S. Alhambra picking up a high rate of speed and then they make the turn onto Altamira in order to avoid having to stop at the Barquera circle. It is a problem.

She again related another incident last January when a woman was coming down Altamira at a normal rate of speed and there was a guy on a Porsche who took the turn, very quickly, on the wrong side of the street and the lady had to divert into Mrs. Mendoza's driveway and very nearly hit her car. If her kids had been in the driveway playing ball, they would have been...

Mr. Morrison commented that he was surprised that the opposition was still "at it." He mentioned that he had told them that we were going to come up with another design to address the problem. To Mrs. Mendoza's question as to whether Mr. Morrison lived in that area he stated no, but not very far away, on Sunrise Avenue. He further noted that he is very familiar with her neighborhood and understands the problem.

Mrs. Mendoza again emphasized that something needs to be done. For one neighbor to say to her that his vote is more important and it should count more because he is more impacted because his house is right on the circle is not fair.

Dr. Elbadrawi proceeded to explain the new design pointing to the map. Some of the residents might not like the old design because it was going to shift some of the traffic closer to their houses and we agree. I think they will agree on this design. At the intersection of S. Alhambra and Veronese the wide pavement that the cars to go at a high speed from S. Alhambra making the left turn. The plan is reducing the turning radius of the curves to allow for slower entry and exit. When you go toward the intersection of Veronese/Mendello you find you have a football field, and the pavement is very, very wide, so what we are looking at increasing the size of the "park" and narrow the pavement. Mr. Morrison interjected that the criticism was that we were destroying their park and now the plan is to increase the size of it.

Dr. Elbadrawi explained that cars coming from the west along S. Alhambra, making a right turn at this leg of Veronese (pointing to the plan) come at high speed conflicting with the cars going to Mendello and cannot see them coming at a high speed. This is why they are looking to change the alignments of the street in order to meet at Mendello, and then they have the choice to go to Mendello with a right turn or to go to Veronese with a left turn. Also they are considering ALL

WAY STOPS at S. Alhambra and Veronese, where all the cars have to come to a complete stop. This will not be as restrictive as a traffic circle, but we are looking to put a traffic circle at the intersection of Camarin and S. Alhambra. The reason we chose that intersection and not Altamira, pointing to the plan is that Veronese starts here, and the pavement is about 31 feet wide. It was thought that if we shift this curve, this is the current edge of the pavement, if we move it in this direction, we can create a lateral shift in the path of the car, then coming through the revision of the edge of the pavement then we do not need to take anything from the swale, like the other two circles we have at Capilla and Barquera which with the agreement of the residents we took part of the swale. In this case we do not need to take any part of the swale.

Mr. Morrison asked if the curve on the plan was an existing circular drive and Dr. Elbadrawi noted yes, but it is being shifted a little bit so that the access will be from S. Alhambra. You will have access on both sides. If we can work with the owner and provide him an access on Veronese, it will be much better, but we need to work with him, so we think he will approve. To the question of if we are extending his circle, Yes, we are extending it or making it more curved so he can go to the side streets, we are also re-aligning the intersection to stop cars from entering from S. Alhambra to Veronese. At a future time, if we decide to put the circles on Granada, we would remove those stop signs. Only the stop sign on Veronese would remain.

Mrs. Mendoza reiterated that she is for anything that makes the most people happy. Her end goal is not to annoy her neighbors. Her end goal is to take care of a problem that for the last 14 years that she has lived in that neighborhood has gotten progressively worse. And, because of the loss of something very dear to them and she does want to see any other family go thru what they did or worse. She asked if a stop sign can be placed between this circle here (pointing to the plan) and the Barquera circle. Dr. Elbadrawi noted we will have to look into that. Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Mendoza also asked if it would it be feasible to put one of the diverters that had been discussed earlier in Altamira so that cars do not take that turn.

Mr. Goldsmith: “I think we need to go forward with this design plus a little more that we added to it tonight and tell the neighbors that this is what we are going to go with now.”

Mr. Morrison recounted that there is a circle that the City has been trying to place at Columbus and Greenway for four years and the neighbors are evenly divided. He noted that we are waiting for a house to change hands and we will try again. Mr. Morrison also noted that he did not know how the issue of the tree going to be removed was presented to the residents by the opponents.

Mr. Morrison asked staff to get the Riviera Homeowners Association involved. Mr. Goldsmith suggested not only sending it back to the neighbors, but walking around and talking to them. Mr. Morrison mentioned that he will get in touch with Mr. Julie, the chairman of the association’s traffic and safety committee and once we agreed on a plan, we will have a community meeting. Mr. Morrison suggested that we hold the meeting at Ponce Middle School due to its proximity to the neighborhood and schedule it for September.

Dr. Elbadrawi was instructed to have a proposal ready for the next meeting in July. Mr. Goldsmith suggested we have two proposals: one like the one previously presented and one with the suggested changes/additions incorporated.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Morrison brought up the proposed meeting that Miami-Dade County will hold on Monday June 30, to discuss the Commodore Trail Bicycle Facility Improvements. He received a letter advising him of the meeting and when he asked Mr. Delgado to get plans and/or more information so that he could prepare for the meeting, Mr. Delgado noted that this project is at its very early stages and that Ms. Priscilla Morales, the Project Manager, will be coming before the City Commission at their next meeting to appraise the Commissioners of what the County is proposing to do.

Mr. Delgado noted that the County is trying to accomplish. According to the sketch, on the east side of the bridge they are going to run a separate pedestrian/bicycle bridge (from existing park to existing park, they left the park on the northwest corner alone, Mr. Morrison noted) connecting the bicycle path on the east side of Cocoplum Circle with the one north of the bridge which leads to Edgewater Drive.

Mr. Goldsmith asked what has been going on since we had discussed bike path in general. Mr. Delgado noted that we have a Bicycle Master Plan, but Mr. Goldsmith wanted to know where we were at with all that.

Mr. Delgado: "Marlin Engineering finished the Master Plan. Now we need to be implementing it as we go. Remember Segovia will be the first one. By doing the Segovia Median we will accomplish the connection to Alhambra Circle. Mr. Delgado also noted that as we go along and do the streets, most of them will have bicycle lanes. We completed the ones in Cocoplum and we will be doing the ones in Bella Vista. So we are moving along."

Mr. Goldsmith noted that there is one section on Snapper Creek without a path. Mr. Delgado noted that we had already designed that and it may be that with the pedestrian/bicycle bridge that would be a good opportunity move that portion forward.

Mr. Delgado ended with: That is the famous Commodore Bicycle Trail.

Mr. Morrison: "When we designed the Hardee Bridge the thought was that it was not just a traffic circle. We also planned to either cantilever bridge to accommodate a bike lane or install a separate foot bridge, and now with the bicycle path coming down Riviera and Granada, it is going to be a key piece to tie it all together. The circles came first. Have we given up on the cantilevering the bridge or do we have an answer on that yet?"

Mr. Delgado noted that the consultant is working on that with the Board of Architects, looking to see what would be best, cantilever, attaching or putting a separate bridge.

Mr. Morrison: “So both options are still being considered?” Mr. Delgado: “Yes they are still being considered.”

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Yoder: “I forwarded an e-mail from a resident down near Ponce Junior High, (the resident said that’s me!). Dr. Yoder continued: Maybe we can...”

Chip George, 5900 Cellini Street:

Mr. George sent an e-mail to the Mayor and Commissioners asking for their help in modifying an island that the City had installed where Mariposa, Augusto, Marius, Cellini and Mall converge. He stated that probably 50% of the traffic on Mariposa, Mall and Cellini is not local, drivers searching for a way to avoid traffic on nearby roads. He suggests that by closing the west traffic cut, where Mariposa and Augusto meet, and by planting sea grapes and buttonwood in the existing island, it would create a visual barrier that would block the school’s trash from blowing through the neighborhood, alleviate the sound and visual pollution generated by the school and eliminate the perception that Mariposa, Mall, and Cellini as through streets, thus cutting down on non-local traffic. There are two thru streets, and there would still be an opening if you go 50 feet further east. Mr. George also noted that he would be willing to raise half of the cost of these improvements from the neighborhood.

Mr. Morrison noted that he did not see any problem with that. We would create some more green space and Mr. Delgado said that he would like to meet with the resident at the site and review a very nice sketch Esther had received and to discuss the existing situation and how we can address some of the residents’ concerns regarding that area. Mall Street was the first street that was closed which used to connected Granada and Hardee intersection. Right now what Mr. George suggests is a good idea, but Mr. Delgado would like to meet with him and then come back to the Board with a recommendation.

Dr. Yoder mentioned that we are moving on the Blue Road roundabouts. The City did some markings on Blue Road and S. Alhambra. Mr. Delgado noted that we are moving along. Mr. Delgado noted that the project will be awarded in July but Mr. Delgado does not think we will be able to start construction before school starts. Discussion ensued.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.