



Legislation Text

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A Resolution approving the process for a neighborhood initiated enhancement program to add lighting and/or sidewalks to neighborhoods.

Sidewalks and well-lit pedestrian paths provide the opportunity for pedestrians to move about safely throughout their neighborhood and can contribute significantly to an enhanced sense of community and improved quality of life. Throughout the City of Coral Gables, numerous neighborhood streets do not currently have well lit sidewalks or pedestrian ways. Currently, it is estimated that the City has approximately 243 miles of streets and only about 150 miles of sidewalks. While the total cost to complete sidewalks on both sides of all streets throughout the City would cost tens of millions of dollars, it is recognized that a program of this magnitude would need to be a long term continual effort. Additionally, in many cases it may not be practical to add sidewalks and they may not be desired by homeowners. Staff is recommending to move forward with an initial program, within practical limitations, that would provide the opportunity to add sidewalks and/or improved pedestrian lighting in neighborhoods and locations where they are most desired. The City Commission has discussed on numerous occasions that the City should have a process that would facilitate resident initiated efforts to enhance their neighborhood by adding additional pedestrian oriented lighting and/or sidewalks.

The recommended process is as follows:

1. Any property owner may contact the City with a notification that they would like to add sidewalks and/or lighting to their neighborhood.
2. The requesting resident will be provided a program brochure which will describe the overall program in detail. Additionally, staff will provide the resident with a map based 'location form' designed to specify the specific streets in which the enhancements are requested.
3. Upon receiving the completed 'location form', staff will review and determine if the specific location requested is feasible and communicate back to the resident either approving the request as feasible or working with the resident to modify.
4. The requester will then be provided a neighborhood interest form to share with their neighbors. The form will include a map depicting the specifics of the desired enhancements and the specific addresses of all properties included within the enhancement zone. The owners of the identified properties will be provided the opportunity to vote yes or no to further pursue discussion on the proposed enhancements. Each property shall receive one vote. It is the responsibility of the neighborhood to circulate and get interest forms completed by the property owners or designee. In order for the enhancement process to continue into the next steps, support of at-least 50% of the owners of the properties affected is required.
5. Upon receipt of 50% or greater support, staff will initiate a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed project in detail, including the funding requirements.
6. After the neighborhood meeting and establishment of project costs, staff will circulate a formal ballot to determine if residents are agreeable to the proposed assessment needed to implement the enhancements. **It is recommended that a vote of support equal to or greater than two thirds of the residential properties in the enhancement zone is required for the project to proceed.** The two thirds requirement is consistent with Miami-Dade County's procedure for street flow modifications.
7. Upon receipt of the neighborhood's support and formal assessment commitments, staff will develop a project schedule and proceed with design and construction.

Funding for sidewalks is recommended as follows:

- For collector streets that serve a larger neighborhood, the City shall provide 100% funding.
- For local streets serving only the immediate neighborhood, the City shall provide 50% of the funding and the remaining 50% shall be shared by property owners based on lineal feet of frontage through the establishment of an assessment district in accordance with the City's Capital Assessment ordinance 2014-07 (attached).
- It is recommended that in order to begin the sidewalk program next fiscal year that a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) in the amount of \$ 200,000 be added to the 2016/17 CIP program budget. This will allow for approximately two miles of new sidewalks and initiation of the program. This is consistent with the draft strategic action plan objectives to improve mobility and mobility options throughout the City and enhance the pedestrian experience, safety and connectivity in the City through improved lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks and way finding.

Funding for lighting enhancements:

- Shall be through an assessment of all properties included in the enhancement zone, in accordance with the City's Capital Assessment ordinance 2014-07.
- The assessments will be based on a guaranteed not to exceed construction cost which will be provided to all property owners within the enhancement area.
- In order to distribute funding equitably throughout the City, it is recommended that funding be utilized to cover design costs and electrical service costs associated with the enhancements.
- It is recommended that in order to begin the lighting program next fiscal year that a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) in the amount of \$ 500,000 be added to the 2016/17 CIP program budget. This is consistent with the draft strategic action plan objective to enhance the pedestrian experience, safety and connectivity in the City through improved lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks and way finding.

The sidewalks included in this program will be the traditional Coral Gables beige concrete and the lights will be the traditional Acorn style with energy efficient LED fixtures. Staff is currently working to develop an RFP for a contractor to convert the existing Acorn fixtures through-out the City to energy efficient LED, and as part of this RFP the contractor will be required to provide unit prices for the installation of new fixtures that will be included in this enhancement program.