

To: Master Plan Steering Committee, Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Commissioners, and  
Concerned citizens

From: Bob Eckblad, Member, MPSC

Re.: Agenda-Regular meeting MPSC, June 15, 2010

Subject: El Mar Drive and A1A projects

In the MPSC meeting on May 18, 2010, it was agreed that all members should be prepared to present their final ideas in order for the Committee to create a vision for the El Mar Drive project. Since I will be out of town on the 15<sup>th</sup>, following is my vision of what the plan should include.

In reviewing the various options presented by Ocampo, it became clear to me that we must commit to an overall plan at this time, whether or not we have the resources at the present time. My vision is this, beginning at the perimeter and working into the median:

1. Trees along both sides of the street located so as not to interfere with backout parking. It should be a part of the plan that backout parking would be prohibited for any future redevelopment, and that street trees consistent with this plan would be required to be installed by the developer. In addition to the esthetic effects of these trees, some measure of shade would be provided to pedestrians.
2. Underground utilities and attractive poles with turtle-friendly as well as people-friendly lighting.
3. An 8' wide colored (color to match that of other sidewalks in town) concrete sidewalk along both sides of the street. What residents and visitors love about LBTS is the fact that it is pedestrian friendly.
4. A 2' wide curb and gutter drainage system.
5. Two 10' traffic lanes in each direction. I don't believe that bike lanes are necessary given the limited amount of vehicle traffic.
6. A 20' median as follows:
  - a. Cross walks at the ends of each median as presented by Ocampo, possibly with a semi-circular seating height wall with low maintenance upscale landscaping such as a relatively slow-growing palm like the Bismarkia and/or low-profile Chinese Fan Palms.
  - b. A cross walk across the center (not to be confused with the pathway down the center) of each median with a gazebo, pergola, or similar structure, seating, and landscaping consistent with that utilized at the median end crosswalks.
  - c. Landscape materials should include "upscale" palm trees such as a variety of Date Palm and a couple of Seagrape trees in each median. I see these as trees that project the image of a "seaside village". We should avoid palms that drop coconuts and can cause injury. We should keep it simple by just irrigating and sodding the medians,

which requires relatively low maintenance (just edge and mow), unlike the Commercial Blvd. Medians and the Seagrape Drive landscaping where crews can be seen regularly pulling weeds and trimming.

On the subject of the A1A FDOT project, I would be opposed to investing \$600,000 +, unless the elements are functional such as covered bus stops or shade trees for pedestrians. With jails being closed, teachers being laid off, it seems ludicrous to be out trying to find a way to spend money, regardless of whose pocket it comes from; as they say, there ain't no such thing as a free lunch.