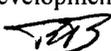




AGENDA ITEM MEMORADUM

Development Services

Bud Bentley

Assistant Town Manager / Development Services
Director 

Department

COMMISSION MEETING DATE - 7:00 PM	Deadline to Town Clerk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aug 23, 2011	Aug 12 th

- Presentation Reports Consent Ordinance
 Resolution Quasi-Judicial **Old Business** New Business

FY2011 DESIGNATED HIGH PRIORITY ITEM - PRIORITY TOPIC

SUBJECT TITLE: A1A and Commercial Boulevard Intersection Improvements - Status Report

EXPLANATION: Molly J. Hughes has provided the following information.

Background

On Friday, April 8th, 2011, a group of citizens, business representatives, the Town’s traffic consultant, and Town staff toured the downtown segment of Commercial Boulevard to better understand and diagnose traffic circulation, parking and pedestrian issues associated with the Town’s widely-enjoyed downtown weekend special events.

The observations showed that severe backups are being experienced on the westbound approach at the Commercial Boulevard/SR A-1-A intersection during weekend special events (and heavy beach going hours, based on independent observations). During these periods, the number of westbound through vehicles exceeds the storage capacity of the intersection's single westbound through-and-right-turn lane. This occurs because:

- The general distribution of traffic destinations - more westbound vehicles on Commercial are attempting to travel to the west and north than the single lane can accommodate;
- Some local northbound A-1-A traffic diverts to northbound EL Mar and then westbound Commercial to avoid the left turn lane on A-1-A at Commercial; and,
- Exceptionally high pedestrian volumes crossing SR A-1-A on the north side negatively affect the ability of westbound cars to turn north during their green light cycle. During busy times, the pedestrians don't clear the crosswalk before the end of the westbound green cycle so few right turns are made, thus preventing vehicles in the queue from moving through the intersection, as well.

Some local drivers tire of this habitual condition and use the exclusive left-turn lane as a bypass to move around the right-turning vehicles in order to continue west. There are safety concerns related to the misuse of the left-turn lane as a bypass to continue west.

During that April 8th exercise, it was a consensus that the westbound traffic on Commercial Boulevard could be improved by allowing travel westbound to use both lanes. This change requires re-striping and traffic signal modifications, both of which must be approved by Broward County Traffic Engineering (BCTE) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).



As we advised the Commission in June, BCTE wanted to first test alternative signal modifications that might address the problem, by taking the intersection off the computer-controlled signal system during the periods of heavy congestion (6:00pm Thursday through 6:00am Monday), allowing the westbound movement to demand more green time. The modification was made and the signal has operated in this way since Memorial Day weekend. The consensus is there were some improvements, but the westbound queuing was not sufficiently relieved.

New Actions

1. Subsequent discussions with BCTE and FDOT resulted in another proposed signal modification. This modification would add a separate phase for northbound left turns on A-1-A at Commercial.

This separate phase for left turns would allow the pedestrian phase on the north side of the intersection (Wings to Athena) to clear more pedestrians. If the A-1-A left turn movement operates better, we hoped this might encourage some of the drivers diverting to El Mar to stay on A-1-A since the wait time should be reduced.

If the Town's agrees, this signal modification could be implemented before the end of September, and observed for any impacts during the fall before high season begins.

2. Our original request for dual westbound lanes on Commercial Boulevard at the A-1-A intersection has been verbally approved by FDOT. As noted earlier, this will require a restriping plan, which will require survey and engineering expense to the Town to prepare.

Recommendation: We recommend the Town request the test of the separate phase for A-1-A northbound left turn traffic and the added pedestrian crossing time on the north of the intersection. We will begin the preparation of the plans for permitting and re-striping of the intersection.

Reviewed by Town Attorney

Yes No

Town Manager Initials

File: 8-26 AC Hughes Traffic Report