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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: May 5, 2008

SUBJECT: GO Bond Street Improvement Project on Star Island

This letter to the Commission is in response to referrals from several of your offices regarding the GO Bond Street Improvement Program on Star Island. The current scope of work as defined in the Basis of Design Report (BODR) consists of the following:

- Milling and resurfacing the roadway
- Positioning landscape lighting at the entrance and circle palm areas
- Replacing and upgrading the water mains from six-inch to eight-inch diameter
- Installing concrete pavers at the entry
- Installing six-inch flush curbs on both sides of the roadway

The City has attempted to minimize the impact of construction on the driveway and curb encroachments by aligning the proposed six-inch flush curbs within the existing asphalt, which will require the removal or modification of only a small portion of the encroachments.

Some residents are concerned the current plans for the project will not alleviate perceived drainage problems on the Island. The current stormwater system on Star Island is typical for residential areas. Star Island East and West Drives have center crowns that drain half of the stormwater inward toward the median / green space area and half outward toward the swales that abut the homes. However, over the years, some residents have built up the City owned swales with landscaping and raised curbs. These encroachments impede drainage to the swales and cause some ponding on the roads.

Star Island is not in a Stormwater Priority Basin and there are currently no funds allocated for the project to address drainage issues. Should the Commission wish to address drainage on Star Island, there are two options that do not impact the swale encroachments.

The first option adds inlets with drainage piping at low points adjacent to the street. These improvements would be connected to the existing stormwater system draining into the existing outfall. This solution is estimated to cost between $125,000 and $250,000.

This option does not address the 5-year 1-day storm event; it reduces the spot drainage problems caused by the encroachments in the swales. This is seen as an acceptable option

as Star Island is not a Stormwater Priority Basin.

It should be noted that most residents would prefer to solve the stormwater issue by a more extensive option. This involves sloping the entire street toward the median / green space area and leaving swale areas and encroachments undisturbed. Should the Commission wish to pursue this option, the consultant would need to redesign the street and median. This would require rebuilding the profile of the street and changing the slope to the median. The median would also have to be re-graded to detain / retain more stormwater.

This option would require the creation of additional drawings and new calculations to determine the area's size and ability to cope with a significant quantity of storm water. Further, the median contains a number of piping systems including water, sewer, gas, and irrigation that would have to be considered by the consultant during design.

Additional construction and soft costs would have to be established, as they are not currently included in the project budget. Based on preliminary estimates, reconstruction of the street base, resurfacing the roadway, and re-grading the median would require the allocation of $500,000 to $600,000 in additional funding, including soft costs.

No other options remain under the BODR defined and budgeted scope of work, unless staff is directed to remove the encroachments or to establish a new approach to storm drainage by installing a well-based system. In order for storm water drainage to be improved without installing a well system, the right-of-way encroachments, including all of the raised curbs and mounds, would have to be removed to recover the swales for drainage. A well-based system, like the second option, would require additional drawings and new calculations.

While option one appears to have the least impact and is the least costly alternative, none of these potential improvements have been included in the project discussions or the project budget, and they are not currently incorporated in the scope of work.

The policy of the Commission has been to not increase the scope and cost in non-priority basin ROW projects, as this could lead to a situation where neighborhoods are competing against other neighborhoods for very scarce stormwater funds.

I hope this information clarifies this issue. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

JMG\TH\JECh

c: Tim Hemstreet, Assistant City Manager
Jorge Chartrand, CIP Director