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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti H. Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager 

DATE: October 28, 2008

SUBJECT: Lake Pancoast Neighborhood CIP Project Parking Issues

The purpose of this LTC is to advise you of the background and current status of the Lake Pancoast neighborhood Right-of-Way Project (ROW) and provide information as to the effects to be expected to parking in the neighborhood once the project is constructed.

Parking has always been an issue in the Lake Pancoast neighborhood, just as it is in many of the other neighborhoods in which we are doing ROW projects. The Basis of Design Report (BODR) which the City Commission previously approved for this project states that for the entire Lake Pancoast neighborhood (BP-8C), we had intended to provide "parking spaces for approximately 120 cars." The 100% design drawings which we have reviewed with Miami-Dade County and they have approved provide a total of 117 parking spaces for the Lake Pancoast neighborhood. We believe the intent of the approved BODR has been met.

Although it is difficult to quantify the number of vehicles that park informally/illegally under the existing conditions, this issue has been discussed with residents and stakeholders throughout the project's planning and design phases, including additional neighborhood and Collins Park Homeowners Association (HOA) meetings, and Historic Preservation Board (HPB) hearings. We believe that all involved throughout the process have been aware of the issues caused by the current informal parking conditions and the challenges that would occur once the ROW project improvements are constructed. Beginning in the planning phase it was recognized that fewer vehicles in total would be able to park in the neighborhood once the improvements were constructed and the parking was brought into code compliance and formalized. CIP staff has reviewed the parking situation in the Lake Pancoast neighborhood and prepared the following analysis based on some recent resident requests and comments:

1. The City would not prevail if it challenges the County and proposes installing angle parking on Flamingo Drive from 24th Street to 25th Street. This design was actually proposed in an earlier stage of the plans and not pursued. Due to the width of the ROW in this area, the only way we could construct angle parking would be to not provide a sidewalk. This would create a situation where pedestrians would be forced to walk in the street resulting in a design safety issue that the County will not permit. The CIP Office discussed this issue with the City's Planning Department and they were in agreement.
2. Proposing to remove some of the landscaped islands on 24th Street and Liberty Avenue to gain an additional 3 or 4 parking spaces would require making another presentation to the HPB. These islands were added to the project at the request of the HPB and we would have to go before the Board at a public hearing to request the modification. Given the small number of parking spaces that would be gained and since this was a significant issue to the HPB when we previously presented the project, the City does not believe the change would be well received.

The Administration could certainly take this issue to a hearing and reclaim the spaces if the City Commission should desire.

3. The City could consider providing on-street parking on Flamingo Place between 25th Street and 26th Street. However, this area is all single-family homes and the Planning Department states that at one time there was on-street parking on this block and that at the residents' request the parking was removed and the swale areas reclaimed by the residents. The City would anticipate there would be strong resident opposition from this area over any proposal to reintroduce on-street parking.

The project is currently at 100% design and is scheduled to begin the permitting phase. Any significant revisions at this time would likely require additional services from the project consultant resulting in additional delay and cost to the project.

As is typical with ROW projects, staff works with the consultant and the regulatory agencies, when possible, to accommodate resident requests for minor modifications to the proposed design. However, given the level of community interest in parking related issues we are in the process of scheduling a community meeting in early November to review the completed design and regulatory issues, discuss parking plan options and address any concerns. If as a result of the meeting there is consensus for a significant deviation from the approved BODR, then this request and its associated cost impact would be submitted to the City Commission for review and consideration.

With regard to recent discussion concerning the number of Parking Department Zone 11 permits that have been issued, the Parking Department reports that as of September 29, 2008, 252 Residential Permits and 93 Visitor Hang Tags have been issued, for a total of 345. The total number of permits issued as a function of total parking spaces available is not inconsistent with other Zone Parking districts throughout the City.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to let me know.

JMG/TM/JED/JGC/HKM

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