



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 284-2008

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

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

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: October 31, 2008

SUBJECT: 63<sup>rd</sup> Street at Collins Avenue Intersection Update

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to inform you that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in an attached letter dated October 6, 2008, has disapproved the City's request to keep the eastbound traffic "free flowing" across the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Collins Avenue intersection.

FDOT made a determination to have the "free flow" condition removed and to revert the intersection to its "as built" condition, restoring all traffic signals to standard operating conditions (See Attachment 2, "As Built" Condition"). FDOT based this determination following its evaluation of a City of Miami Beach commissioned study, which evaluated various alternatives to determine which would be the most preferred condition for this intersection. It merits underlining that the City of Miami Beach study concluded and recommended that the preferred alternative was that of the "free flow" condition (See Attachment 3, "Free Flow" Condition"). However, FDOT's findings did not support this recommendation, subsequently requesting the intersection be reverted to its "as built" condition.

Pursuant to FDOT's ruling, the City has coordinated with Miami-Dade County to open the intersection to its "as built" condition on Friday, November 7, 2008.

### BACKGROUND

The City retained the services of Marlin Engineering on November 28, 2007 to evaluate intersection improvements at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Collins Avenue (Phase 1 Study). Once the evaluation was completed, the City met with FDOT, Miami-Dade County, and Marlin Engineering to determine the next steps for defining the final configuration of the subject intersection. At the conclusion of this meeting, the traffic engineering authorities of both County and State, determined that a revised study for the intersection of 63<sup>rd</sup> and Collins Avenue was subsequently required in order to address additional traffic engineering parameters. These parameters included making improvements on the timing of signals; a detailed review of the traffic accident data for the intersections of 63<sup>rd</sup> at Indian Creek and Collins Avenue, and for the intersections of 65<sup>th</sup> Street at Indian Creek and Collins Avenue; as well as any associated impacts to immediately surrounding intersections.

Also, at the request of Commissioner Steinberg, a "Texas U-turn" (continuous left turn from Collins to southbound Indian Creek at 63<sup>rd</sup>) was also analyzed on the south side of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street from Collins Avenue to Indian Creek Drive to provide for north bound Collins Avenue to west bound 63<sup>rd</sup> Street turning movement, which is not allowed under the "as built" configuration.

The study also evaluated the potential operational impacts at other three intersections in the immediate area including Collins Avenue at 65<sup>th</sup> Street, Indian Creek Drive at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Indian Creek at 65<sup>th</sup> Street. At these intersections, simulation analyses with existing and future traffic were performed during the morning and afternoon peak hours for the following four (4) alternatives:

## LTC

October 31, 2008

### 63<sup>rd</sup> Street at Collins Avenue Intersection Update

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1. Alternative 1: Existing and year 2030 traffic with existing signal timing, optimized signal timing and existing geometry.
2. Alternative 2: Year 2030 traffic with 65<sup>th</sup> Street One-Way westbound street improvement.
3. Alternative 3: Year 2030 traffic with Texas U-Turn intersection improvement for northbound Collins at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street.
4. Alternative 4: Existing and year 2030 traffic for 65<sup>th</sup> Street with two left-turn lanes westbound approach improvement.

For each alternative the analysis considered operational elements at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and permanent signal operation.

The Phase 2 Study completed by Marlin Engineering concluded that the re-configuration of the intersection was warranted and recommended the "free flow" option as the preferred alternative. The City met with FDOT and Miami-Dade County on August 25, 2008 to discuss the results of this additional study. At this meeting, FDOT stated that they did not recommend proceeding with the modifications of this intersection due to the following safety concerns identified during field observations:

1. Gap availability and weave conflicts.
2. Excessive speeds and speed differentials.
3. Sight distance restrictions.

Mr. Bob Williams, Interim Signals and Sign Division Chief with Miami-Dade County Public Works, indicated to FDOT that the benefits of the current "free flow" operation were significant and much appreciated by the majority of the users. Furthermore, after receiving an explanation of FDOT's concerns, Mr. Williams further indicated that given the fact that the "free flow" operation had worked very successfully for the past couple years, and there currently existed a well-reasoned countywide push to increase the use of "free flow" operations, he was concerned that the disadvantages of re-signalizing this intersection may outweigh the advantages.

### CONCLUSION

Since the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street link connects to State roads, FDOT has the ultimate authority to approve or disapprove the proposed re-configuration. Therefore, in spite of the recommendation of the traffic engineering studies and Miami-Dade County's opinion, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street intersection at Collins Avenue must be restored to its "as-built" condition.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Attachment:

1. October 6, 2008 FDOT Letter
2. "As Built" Condition
3. "Free Flow" Condition

  
CML/FHB/FV/XF/CL



*Florida Department of Transportation*

CHARLIE CRIST  
GOVERNOR

District Six, Traffic Operations  
1000 NW 111 Avenue, Room 5206  
Miami, Florida 33172-5800  
Telephone (305)470-5335

STEPHANIE C. KOPELOUSOS  
SECRETARY

October 6, 2008

Fernando Vazquez, P.E.  
City Engineer  
City of Miami Beach Public Works Department  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Re: 63<sup>rd</sup> Street at Collins Avenue

Dear Mr. Vazquez,

As a follow-up to recent meetings, the department's field review and study of the location, and our review of the material presented in support of making the temporary conditions at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Collins Avenue permanent, we have finalized our recommendation. The department has determined that the maintenance of traffic (MOT) which permitted free-flow operation will be removed, and the traffic signal at this intersection will be placed back into operation. This decision was arrived at after careful evaluation which considered the intersection geometry, crash history, pedestrian activity and access.

During field observations several safety concerns were identified:

- gap availability and weave conflicts
- excessive speeds and speed differentials
- sight distance restrictions

We understand that the city committed resources to the study of the continued free-flow operation; however, the studies presented did not address the safety concerns identified at the beginning of the study effort as needing to be resolved. Additionally, the study conclusions relative to intersection level of service (LOS) seem to have been based on simulation analyses found to contain errors. It should be noted that the proposal also results in a more circuitous route for many residents.

While the department is unable to support the proposal at this time, we will continue to assess the location for possible improvements. Please let us know if you have other ideas on how to address the safety concerns discussed above.

Sincerely,

Debora M. Rivera, P.E.  
District Traffic Operations Engineer

DMR/

cc: Gus Pego, P.E., District Secretary  
Robert Williams, P.E., Miami-Dade County Signals and Signs Division  
Omar Meitin, P.E., Assistant District Traffic Operations Engineer

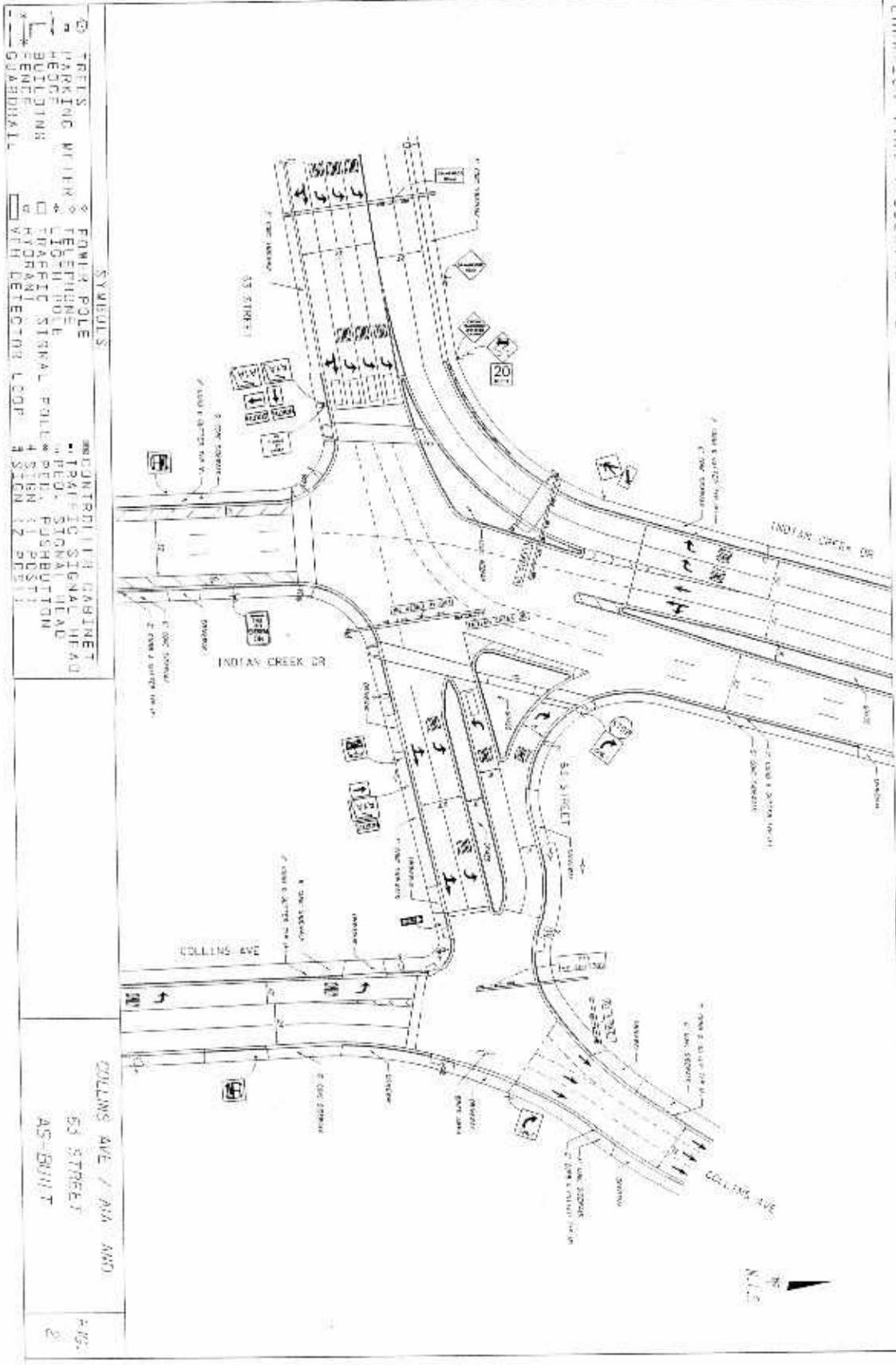
RECEIVED  
CITY OF MIAMI BEACH  
09 OCT - 9 PM 4: 37  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

MARLIN ENGINEERING INC.  
 CONSULTING ELECTRICAL ENGINEER

LOCATION: I-75 COLLINGS AVE & 63 AVI

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

PREPARED BY: MARLIN ENG. INC.

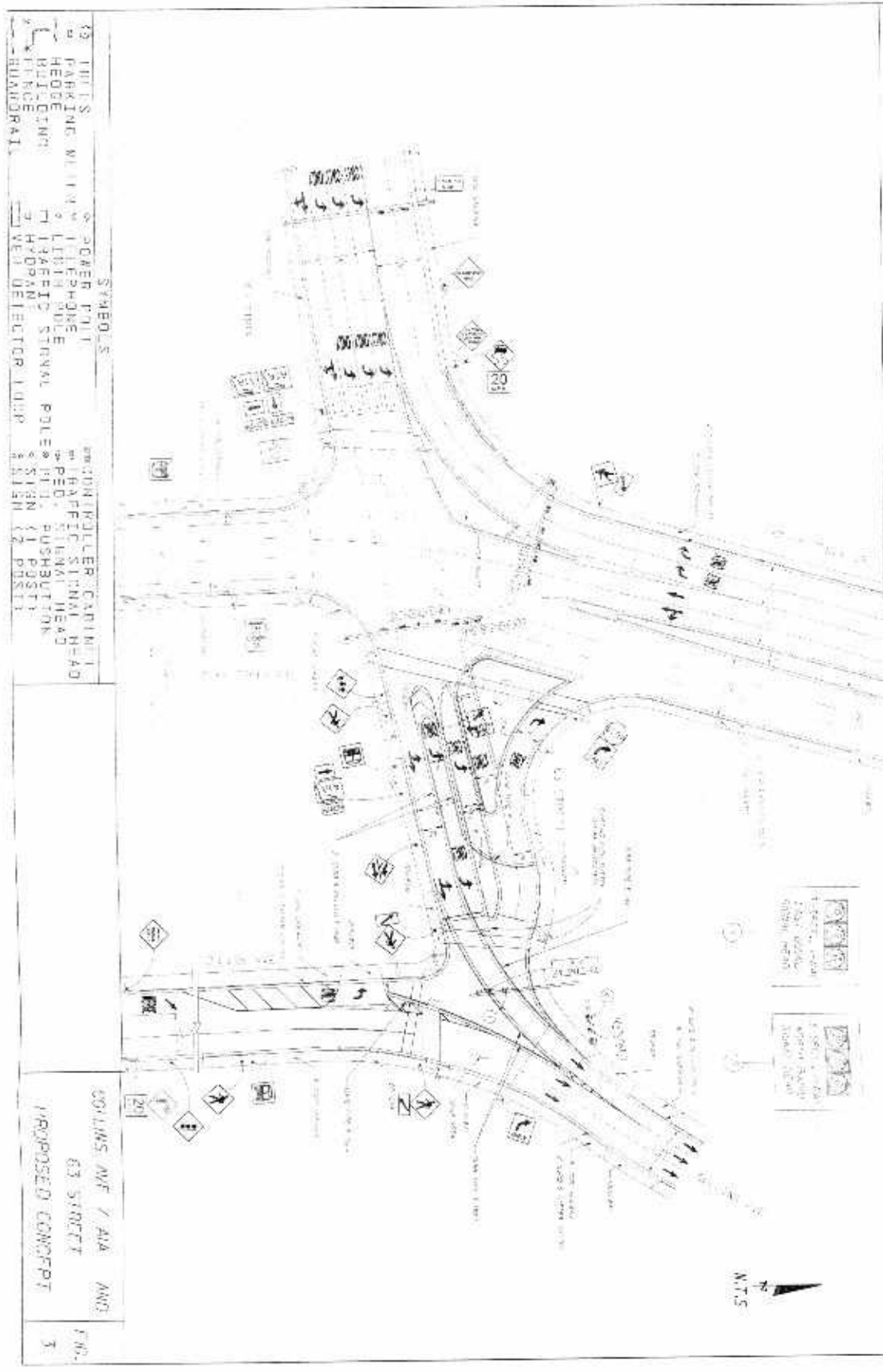


WARLIN ENGINEERING, INC.  
 CONDITION DRAWING

LOCATION: I.D. & COLLINS AVE & 63<sup>RD</sup> AVE

CITY OF: MIAMI BEACH

PREPARED BY: WARLIN ENG. INC.



SYMBOLS	
13	TRIPLES
14	PARKING METER
15	HOOD
16	BUILDING
17	FENCE
18	RAILROAD
19	POWER POLE
20	TELEPHONE
21	LIGHT POLE
22	TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLE
23	HYPHAM
24	VEH DETECTOR LOOP
25	CONTROLLER CABINET
26	TRAFFIC SIGNAL HEAD
27	TRAFFIC SIGNAL HEAD
28	PUSHBUTTON
29	SIGNAL POST
30	POST

COLLINS AVE / AVE AND  
 63 STREET  
 PROPOSED CONCEPT  
 3