



Project Advisory Group Meeting No. 3

Date: Thursday, February 16, 2017
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Location: Miami Dade College
InterAmerican Campus
627 SW 27th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33135
Attendees: See Sign-in Sheet at the End of this Document

HNTB Consultant Project Manager Vilma Croft, P.E., welcomed the attendees and led the discussion stating the main purpose of the meeting was to focus on the typical section analysis, and to have Project Advisory Group (PAG) members select a recommended typical section for further analysis.

Vilma Croft: I forwarded a copy of the meeting minutes from the January 12, 2017, Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting to all PAG members with the meeting invitation. They have also been posted on the project website. Are there any comments or would anyone like to summarize the meeting discussion?

Comment: I don't know about summarizing the meeting, but those were great minutes with a lot of detail.

Vilma Croft: Yes, the minutes were very detailed. Isabel took the meeting notes.

Vilma Croft: During the last meeting we analyzed some of the alternatives and selected two for further evaluation. Some of the things we discussed were potential typical section elements. We will have further discussion about those elements during this meeting. For example, on SW 7th Street there is a consistent 50-foot right of way throughout the entire corridor. On SW 8th Street, the right of way varies between 60 and 75 feet. When a typical section is developed, we look at the elements that are generally consistent throughout the project. If you prefer a two-lane, two-way typical section, it would not be changed from one block to the next. It would be the same throughout the project corridor. Tonight we will be "building" a typical section with a program called Streetmix. We will start with the two-lane, two-way alternative. Would you like to start with SW 7th Street or should we begin with SW 8th Street?

Comment: Let's begin with SW 7th Street.

Comment: I don't remember having selected two alternatives. I remember saying that we wanted to see the best alternatives before moving forward.

Vilma Croft: When you say the "best alternatives," do you mean selecting the lane width or elements such as parking? That is what we are going to discuss today. We are going to start with the two-lane

and three-lane alternatives from the last meeting. Whether it's three travel lanes going in one direction, or two travel lanes with a transit lane. Those are options for the three-lane alternative. The presentation included an illustration of the existing typical section with a 50-foot right of way and 33 feet of pavement on SW 7th Street.

Comment: Does this typical section include curb and gutter plus sidewalk?

Vilma Croft: Yes, it includes a 2-foot curb and gutter. If you prefer the two-way option, what would you prefer in the middle? There could be a grass median or a dual-turn lane.

Question: Can the travel lanes be 10 feet wide instead of 11 feet wide?

Vilma Croft: The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) standard is 11 feet. That is generally the minimum acceptable width.

Comment: The *Florida Green Book* allows 10-foot lanes with design flexibility.

Vilma Croft: We need to keep in mind the buses traveling along this corridor. An 11-foot travel lane is already narrow for buses.

Bao-Ying Wang: This is a state road. The *Florida Green Book* is for non-state road systems. Standards established by this manual are intended for use on all new and resurfacing projects for off-state highway and federal aid systems.

Comment: I would like to ask, because I went to one of the first meetings that you had. I heard about what was happening but I have not been able to come to some of the other meetings. I made an effort to come here today because I am questioning why this is happening. Why is the FDOT changing the existing traffic pattern?

Vilma Croft: The FDOT is conducting what we call a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. One of the things a PD&E Study examines is safety. Safety is one of the reasons the FDOT is looking at this project.

Comment: Right now pedestrians only have to look in one direction. With the two-lane, two-way alternative, they will have to look in two directions. What is the purpose of this? Even on SW 8th Street, I read somewhere there are approximately 15 pedestrian fatalities a year. I feel very sorry for the people who have lost their lives, but, when you consider nearly 2 million cars traveling along the corridor during a year, a month or a week, losing 15 people because they didn't look isn't very many.

Vilma Croft: A previous study was completed last summer. It was called a "Planning Feasibility Study." That study identified four different options to be carried forward into this PD&E Study for further

analysis. Of the four alternatives identified, one of them was the two-way alternative. There was an additional alternative that maintained the existing traffic configuration. Another alternative was to keep three lanes, but make one lane a transit lane. It also examined reversing the flow, so SW 8th Street would travel westbound and SW 7th Street would travel eastbound.

At the last meeting, we discussed some of the pros and cons of those options and we determined reversing the traffic did not provide many benefits. The issues you have on SW 8th Street would move to SW 7th Street and the other way around. It would be expensive and cause a lot of disruption to businesses and traffic just to end up with the same product. It was decided the two-way option, with one lane in each direction, and maintaining the existing three-lane configuration warranted further analysis.

At this time, we are looking at the elements of both of those alternatives. It does not mean that we have selected either of these as being the best. We are still looking at safety, traffic and other elements before a recommended alternative is selected. The typical section that came from the Feasibility Study was not something the PAG members thought was best. The parking had been eliminated in some areas, and the group felt that parking is very important. We are going to look at is these two options and select the best elements to be included, whether it's parking, bicycle lanes, or other components.

Comment: In Europe and other areas, there are beautiful places that tourists want to visit. There are huge buses that come to those areas but you never see them. They park behind the business districts. There are a lot of empty lots along SW 7th Street. Why doesn't the city purchase one of these lots for the buses that are hindering traffic going toward the expressway? Near SW 14th Street or SW 13th Street there's huge empty lot. The city could just buy it and that would be the parking for all the huge tour buses. Maybe there isn't money for this right now, but it could be something to consider for the future.

Comment: I would agree with that, but I could only imagine a project like that would cost millions and millions of dollars. The impacts business owners and anyone who uses the corridor would experience during the construction of the parking area would be massive. I imagine it would take at least two years or longer to complete a project like that.

Vilma Croft: It would depend on the planned improvements. These would be the things you would consider during an alternatives analysis. That was one of the reasons why we thought reversing the traffic flow did not have much benefit. It would depend on the improvements and how elaborate they are. If you keep the existing traffic flow, you would just be doing milling and resurfacing along with safety improvements. It wouldn't require that much of an investment.

Comment: Let's take into account the suggestion of the empty lot. Instead of spending your money on a lot for buses, you could open a parking garage that would be open for everyone to use. There's

a lot of pedestrian traffic. This would give people a place to park while they visit the restaurants and other local businesses.

Comment: We need to concentrate on SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street, and the issues at hand. This study is about these streets. The issue of where the buses park is something we need to take up with the city, not the FDOT.

Bao-Ying Wang: It's important that we consider future planning for the city and the county. The model for this project was set up based on current and ongoing planning.

Comment: Because all those empty lots are out there, somebody spread the idea that Brickell was going to come into SW 8th Street and buy up property. The landlords that are really slumlords would say, "I'm not going to fix this. I'm going to push it to the ground until Brickell comes in." That's why all those empty lots are there when they should be full of beautiful homes.

Comment: Does the FDOT have the responsibility for putting in sidewalks and maintaining them?

Vilma Croft: The FDOT is responsible for sidewalks that are constructed within the FDOT right of way.

Comment: I'd like to say I don't really see a point of having a median with landscaping.

Vilma Croft: That's why we put it in the illustration. It looks very pretty, but it means that vehicles would only be able to turn at an intersection. That would be a question for you to answer. The guideline is to have 600 feet between median openings. That means if you have a business that is not located at the median opening, you would not be able to turn into it. Would prefer having a dual turn lane or a median?

Question: It would be helpful, as we are going through all of the different alternatives, if you would explain what options could fit within an 11-foot travel lane. Within that 11 feet, could you fit in a median, or a bike lane or parking? That way, we could think of four or five options instead of an open-ended question.

Vilma Croft: In the middle of the street, we could either have a median or a dual turn lane.

Comment: I'm a resident of Little Havana, I walk the neighborhood a lot. I know how terrifying it is to cross SW 7th Street right now. I also know how terrifying it is for moms with their children, with grocery bags, seniors, elderly people, and I really like the idea of the greenspace or median. That way you wouldn't have to cross all of the traffic lanes at once. You would cross one lane and then you would have a resting spot before crossing the other lane. I know the vehicle speed is going to continue no matter which direction the traffic goes. People speed in Miami.

Question: If we take the median out, can we increase the sidewalk width by 5 feet on each side?

Comment: People would also throw trash, beer cans and bottles on a median. There would be trash everywhere.

Question: Is there curb we could move?

Comment: We've also eliminated the parking.

Vilma Croft: We're discussing SW 7th Street. There isn't any parking on SW 7th Street. Moving the curb would mean the drainage would have to be re-constructed. There would also be excavation, which would mean additional construction.

Comment: There's already been a complaint, at some public meetings, about the way our bus stops are right now. They go all the way to the edge of the existing sidewalk. When the bus comes up, there is no "wobble room." People have complained that it's dangerous because the sidewalk is not wide enough. I just want to say that it's another reason to consider widening the sidewalk. Trying to fit in those bus stops, even a small bus stop, is like you have three inches between the bus and the curb. That's not safe.

Question: Would this typical section be for the Brickell area as well as the Little Havana area?

Vilma Croft: Yes, and you also need to think about what taking out a lane would do to the traffic.

Question: Can you add two trees on either side to see what that would look like?

Comment: Now it would look more like a neighborhood.

Bao-Ying Wang: Then the sidewalk would need to be wider.

Comment: I think wider sidewalks with shade trees would be very nice. It would be great for people in wheelchairs. I work with people who have spinal injuries. Narrow sidewalks give them a smaller area to navigate in, plus there are the curb cuts for cars.

Vilma Croft: If you put trees in some of the areas you have on SW 8th Street, and even in some places where it's wider, where there is landscaping or even signs, you would still only have a five-foot sidewalk.

Comment: Aren't there other ways to do that? You could put a system in where growth for the trees is underneath in a smaller area.

Comment: SW 7th Street is miserable for pedestrians in the summertime. There's no shade and it's hot.

Comment: I think it's important, when we think about this, that we are blessed to be working on two streets. That way, if we are going to add parking on SW 8th Street, maybe we can make SW 7th Street a little more pedestrian friendly. Or, if we want to put more transit on SW 7th Street, we can make SW 8th Street more walkable. We have two streets where we can give and take, where we can add parking, or where we can add safety features. We have a little wiggle room to work with which, I think, is pretty exciting for this project. We're not working with just one corridor and trying to fit everything in.

Comment: By that same token, when we're talking about SW 7th Street, we need to think about what part of SW 7th Street it is. Because, when you get on SW 7th Street in this section by Miami-Dade College, there are definitely some pedestrian concerns. We have an opportunity to get a little more creative than what we are talking about here. At some point, we would like to talk about our proposal for this block area. We would like to put in some green space, a road block and a promenade. What part of SW 7th Street are we actually talking about?

Vilma Croft: On SW 7th Street, the FDOT portion of the road starts just east of Beacom Boulevard, so this project does not include the block you're referring to.

Comment: Another thing to think about is, it's a shame we have all this development on SW 8th Street but, if we don't emphasize the ability to cross SW 7th Street around the neighborhoods, it's as if we were saying that all we care about is the tourists and we don't care about the residents being able to use the same big commercial district. It's embarrassing for me, as a tour guide, to say, "Here's 8th Street, and look at how wonderful it is." And then, we cross 12th Avenue and we say, "Welcome to the rest of Little Havana," when where we are standing, we can barely cross the street. We feel like we're racing in a marathon so we won't get hit by a car. I think it's not only practical, but also symbolic, that we need to make this area beautiful and pedestrian friendly.

Question: Is it fair to say that it does not have to be a "one-size fits all?" Could there be variations such as on SW 7th Street it wouldn't have to be one way throughout the entire corridor?

Vilma Croft: It depends on what option you select. If you're going one-way, it's not easy to change it into a two-way street. If you're talking about the existing parking on SW 8th Street, some of those parking spaces may need to be removed for safety reasons to improve sight distance.

Comment: You can take out the palm trees, we do not want palm trees.

Comment: It's not that we don't like palm trees, we just like shade.

Comment: The only problem with trees is that you have to have a minimum curb distance of 4 feet.

Vilma Croft: Are you talking about a typical section for the two-way option?

Comment: Why would we need to have a median? No one wants it.

Bao-Ying Wang: The design criteria will eventually be changed. I think we should focus on the big ticket items. The median is part of the design criteria right now. Even though we can show you potentially where the trees would be, there's no guarantee they will be in the same place when the project moves forward to design. We recommend that you focus on the big ticket items. The little details might be modified at a later time.

Comment: The location of a tree is key.

Bao-Ying Wang: Yes, but that will become part of the design detail. Right now, we're trying to lay out the number of lanes, the bike paths, transit and things like that. We have to focus on the big picture. How would you like to see the future corridor of SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street? Honestly, the little details will be changed. We have a design engineer here. He will tell you the same thing.

Vilma Croft: What do you think about adding bike lanes?

Comment: I'm going to be slightly impolite here because I'm going to recommend a different dynamic. I think you are gathering input and that's great. However, some of it is long-winded observation. You have a lot of advisory committee members here who have covered this territory for about 15 to 20 minutes, so, I beg you to take short comments not long ones.

Vilma Croft: What about the bike lanes?

Question: Do you want the bikes on the sidewalk or do you want them on the road?

Vilma Croft: Bicycles cannot be on the sidewalk.

Comment: Well, they will be if you don't have bike lanes built.

Bao-Ying Wang: Also, take into account the existing condition of the traffic along SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street. The area is already saturated. If you want to go from three lanes down to two lanes, how is that going to impact the traffic and the traffic delays?

Question: Where is the traffic going to go? Is it going to shift to SW 6th Street? Will some of the problems we are trying to solve here on SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street just be shifted to SW 6th Street? You are going to have more people walking, more people riding bikes; it's a community area.

Comment: Excuse me, what traffic? It is proven that when you have a collective network you are dividing the traffic to other streets and that's fine. That's what a city is supposed to be. We have to stop thinking about these two streets as just people moving toward Brickell every morning and

every evening. This is a place where people live, so what traffic? Is there traffic? Great - let there be traffic!

Bao-Ying Wang: Are there any residents here? Would you like to see more traffic going through your residential neighborhoods?

Comment: I wouldn't mind having more traffic if I could have streets where I can walk, go shopping and feel comfortable pushing my double stroller. I have nowhere to go. We have no commercial streets that are worth going to. The streets in our neighborhoods are designed in such a way that the traffic will probably not go through because they were designed back before FDOT took over all this. They aren't straight, they shift and they have yield conditions where parking doesn't allow for two cars to go side by side.

Comment: You're talking about The Roads and the Shenandoah area.

Comment: No, you have the same condition in Little Havana. But we have no proper commercial street. This is the last main street that remains in Miami.

Comment: I think one of our main concerns is the speed. This has been rectified a little bit recently at 12th Street and 6th Street, but when drivers in Miami want to make turns they don't pay attention to crosswalks and it's very dangerous. Conditions that make it easier for people to cross streets safely is a number one priority for residents.

Vilma Croft: Are we okay with the elements for the two-way alternative on 7th Street?

Several attendees responded, "No."

Vilma Croft: Let me go back and remind you that we are looking at two options. We are looking at the two-way option, which has one lane in each direction. We are also looking at maintaining three lanes of traffic. We'll also come back and look at the pluses and minuses. Are you okay with these options for the two-way alternative on SW 7th Street?

Question: Why are you showing the trees overlapping the buildings like this?

Vilma Croft: The trees will be set back according to the minimum FDOT clearance, which is 4 feet. What they are pointing out is, when you plant within the minimum clearance, you end up with a clear path that is probably 5-feet wide. You would have a tree but you end up with no usable sidewalk because you need to have the clearance.

Comment: I think that moving the bike lanes together would help with the traffic.

Vilma Croft: Again, we go back to FDOT standards for where the bike lanes would need to go. Do you mean bike lanes on each side? That's the way they are now.

Comment: No, I mean both lanes on one side going in opposite directions.

Vilma Croft: I've never seen bike lanes constructed like that.

Comment: It's very common outside of this area.

Vilma Croft: I would have to check on that. Usually you want the bikes traveling in the same direction as the vehicles.

For now, we'll move on to SW 8th Street. Please keep in mind that this is just a graphic illustration. It's limited by what the software can do. The trees are not going to look exactly like that and we'll have to look into the required offset. This is a work in progress. Looking at the existing conditions on SW 8th Street, there is parking on both sides of the street. The parking varies between 6 and a half and 7 feet wide. This is the existing typical section with three lanes. If we were to make this a two-way street, the concern would be that when you have businesses next to each other, if you put in a median, you would not be able to turn and that would be a concern for some businesses. If you have parking in the back, you would be limited to where you could turn. What are your thoughts on SW 8th Street?

Comment: Leave it the way it is.

Vilma Croft: For a two-way option, what do we have?

Comment: I'm realizing that if we follow FDOT regulations, we will never have an urban street or a street that is for living. We will have a highway if we can't put a tree next to the curb to protect the pedestrians or if we must have a median which goes typically against any commercial street. Commercial streets don't want medians because they want the people to comfortably cross and go from store to store. The only constructive opinion I can give you is that these two streets should become neighborhood, commercial streets that we can enjoy and not just drive by. Either the city or the county needs to take them over. That way, I can ask for trees. I can ask for a two-way, three-way, whichever way. But, at the end of the day, your trees are going to be where they're not supposed to be and your median will be where it's not supposed to be.

Vilma Croft: This is an FDOT road and we have to follow the FDOT guidelines.

Comment: How about considering that there are other major cities with major thoroughfares that have different guidelines? 5th Avenue in New York is a great example. The sidewalks are wider and everything is easier. You can have this crazy traffic going down the street but you're comfortable walking down the sidewalk. To me, parking is obviously an issue. It would help if

we could find alternative parking with parking garages or if the city would buy lots to build garages. If we get rid of the parallel parking on each side, make the sidewalks bigger, that will offer the thoroughfare for traffic and great sidewalks for people to walk on, enjoy an outside café or whatever. Just a comfort for everyone. I think I agree that we're pushing for something that we're never going to see come to fruition. I don't know about this exercise, but I think the solution of getting some lobbying to find some funding to get parking garages for SW 8th Street would be great.

Comment: The only other thing that I would say is, we should be looking at this not just in sections. Like it's been said, if we look at it in a plan, we see that these businesses need driveways. The street doesn't look as pretty when you look at it in a plan, as it does when look at it in sections. When you talk about parking it doesn't have to be throughout the corridor, it might just be in certain sections. The previous study and the one that's taking place now (I don't know what stage it's in now) does not provide enough crosswalks. The existing crosswalks are dingy and small. They don't want to give us more lights for pedestrians to cross safely and that's the stuff that you don't see in sections.

Vilma Croft: The recent safety improvement project actually removed some parking spaces where the existing mid-block pedestrian crossings are now. Where the parking was removed, pedestrians only need to cross three traffic lanes.

Comment: I understand the frustration, but I also want to bring up that we are aware the FDOT has published Context Sensitive Design materials and they are pushing for Complete Streets. They are not completely unaware but may not have made progress in adjusting their standards to incorporate some of the things that we are talking about.

Comment: If they have, then there is no excuse to not take into consideration many of the things that we are suggesting, because it's already part of the initiative they are supporting as far as Complete Streets.

Comment: Some of the regulations may need to be updated to accommodate these suggestions.

Vilma Croft: For example, we know that the desirable FDOT travel lane width is 11 feet. Yes, you can go down to 10 feet, but you also mentioned the buses come to the edge of the sidewalk. That is the kind of thing that happens when you narrow the lane width. If you have a 12-foot lane, buses fit better in the lane. Those are the things you have to consider.

Comment: What you're not saying is, it actually induces higher speeds when you have 12-foot travel lanes. This is the biggest concern. It's has been proven through studies that vehicles travel at higher speeds when there are 12-foot travel lanes.

Vilma Croft: Is this what you are looking for with the two-way alternative? During the last PAG meeting, there were concerns about removing the parking. When you say we can remove some of the parking spaces in order to create wider sidewalks, are the owners of the business where the parking will be removed going to be okay with that? Can we say, “Okay, we are going to pick three or four slots in the street and we’re going to remove the parking from those slots?”

Comment: I think you heard last time that no one wanted parking to be taken out.

Comment: I agree with removing some of the parking; but, with the goal of working as a community to build off-street parking. This is something that we should be doing anyway. Brickell does not have a parking issue the way Little Havana does, so this would not need to apply to the Brickell area.

Question: Is the dimension of 6 and a half feet for a parking lane okay within this segment?

Vilma Croft: Yes, that’s what it is. We would keep it at that distance.

Question: Is part of that 7 feet the gutter?

Vilma Croft: It would be closer to 8 feet with the gutter. Is it safe to say you prefer the two-way alternative?

Question: What other options are there? Is there a bus-lane only option?

Vilma Croft: We are talking about the two-way option. Do you mean a bus-only option where the buses would run in the middle?

Question: Would that be considered? For instance, a bus only lane going toward the Brickell area and then the regular traffic, on either side? I don’t know.

Vilma Croft: This corridor is not part of the SMART Plan.

Comment: So the bus-only lane is not part of that?

Vilma Croft: Correct. That’s what’s being considered on Flagler Street. We’ll move on to discussion about the one-way alternative on SW 7th Street.

Question: Is SW 7th Street narrower than SW 8th Street?

Vilma Croft: Yes, the right of way is narrower on SW 7th Street. The 8-and-a-half-foot sidewalk includes curb and gutter, so you really have a 6-and-a-half-foot sidewalk.

Question: Are you talking about a one-way option with three lanes? Are you also considering one-way with two lanes, or is that not an option?

Vilma Croft: That alternative was not identified in the planning phase.

Question: We did a two-way alternative with two travel lanes. Is it possible to do a one-way alternative with two travel lanes?

Vilma Croft: Yes, that's possible.

Comment: I think in the planning study there was a two-lane one-way option with a bike lane.

Vilma Croft: Yes, it was two lanes plus a transit lane, so it was really three lanes.

Comment: If we are looking at two lanes plus a transit lane from the last meeting, and the two-lane plus transit is essentially three lanes, can we mix it up? If you're looking at transit on Flagler Street, maybe we could incorporate the Complete Streets components here. Whether it's extending the sidewalks, putting in bike lanes or additional parking. It might not help with the flow of traffic like FDOT is thinking, but I think we should have the option to say that if we have three lanes we can decide if we want them for traffic or maybe use one of them for Complete Streets components.

Comment: I'm just confused as to what's going on. I know the sidewalks are narrower than 8 and a half feet, so are you saying that the sidewalks will widen with this new concept?

Vilma Croft: No, I'm saying the sidewalks will remain the same.

Comment: Part of that sidewalk width is also curb and gutter.

Vilma Croft: That is correct.

Comment: Some of the tree wells seem to be two and a half feet square, which leaves four feet of sidewalk to walk on. For example, in front of the Ball and Chain you have a 4-foot clearance.

Vilma Croft: We are still talking about SW 7th Street.

Question: What are some of the elements which could play a role in switching this model up?

Vilma Croft: For this option you could consider something like a bike lane which would be 7 feet. With the speed limit in this area, you could consider a shared travel and bike lane.

Comment: Isn't this also known as a suicide lane?

Question: Are you talking about a protected bike lane?

Vilma Croft: Yes. Is it called a protected bike lane?

Winston Lucky: It's called a buffered bike lane.

Comment: The capacity issue is really only an issue during morning rush hour and evening rush hour. The rest of the day, it's just a question of inappropriate speed. Is that correct? My question, from a design perspective is, if you were to go back and read "Stuck in Traffic," which was done by the Brookings Institute, the author was looking at what it meant to live in an urban area. His recommendation, at the end of the book, was to travel with someone you like because you're going to be stuck in traffic. The real issue for the residents of Little Havana is why they should sacrifice their quality of life for people who choose to work in Brickell. Why can't they get level of service F for 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening, and design for the rest of the day for the people who live there? You could create a driveway for in and out of Brickell, and if it takes an hour to get out of Brickell and then drive through Little Havana, well, it's just the reality of urban living.

Comment: I just want to say if you added trees to this, it would be a nice typical section.

Comment: We looked at the two-lane option. Now we are discussing the three-lane option.

Comment: I don't think we ever said three lanes. I think we said the two lanes going in one direction on SW 7th Street and then going in the other direction on SW 8th Street. I don't think it was ever going to be three lanes.

Vilma Croft: Something to consider, if the traffic on SW 8th Street is bumper to bumper, commuters may take a different route. Are the people who are traveling at that time of day going to stop at your business? The same goes for the traffic in the evening. They may choose to take another route.

Comment: The commuters are not stopping. It's mostly locals and tourists. It's people who are willing to deal with the traffic from Brickell because they are going to go to our local shops because that's where they like to hang out. I know our business owners. A lot of the business owners count mainly on the locals, folks who live nearby and tourists.

Comment: That's apart from Brickell Motors. They have their own clientele.

Vilma Croft: Do you have any comments or concerns about the two-lane alternative?

Comment: It's called the bottle neck.

- Comment: I'm a resident of Little Havana, and I am sick and tired of drivers who don't live in the neighborhood getting preference over the residents and the business owners. You know they are flying by so fast they don't stop anyway.
- Comment: The solution is not to get rid of a travel lane.
- Comments: People are dying here. My neighbors are dying.
- Comment: Don't get dramatic about it. How many people are actually dying?
- Comment: One is too many.
- Comment: Let me just say one thing. You've been coming to every meeting, so I know you are informed about this, but taking a lane away is the inverse of adding a lane to a highway. The fact is there are studies that have been done in recent years that show that every time you add a lane, you're basically adding traffic. That is why we are always adding lanes, but it doesn't take care of the traffic because, at the end of the day, you have to exit through the same off-ramp that reduces traffic to one lane. Adding lanes is the opposite of this. When you reduce lanes, it's not that you're going to add more traffic. Traffic is going to adjust to the amount of pavement and the number of lanes you have. The studies are there, so what I'm trying to tell you is, when you reduce a lane, the traffic is going to adjust and it's going to be reduced. Now volume is going to increase and cars are going to go slower. When cars go slower they get closer together, so the throughput actually increases.
- Comment: They're just going to kill more bikers.
- Comment: That's a different story.
- Comment: What happens is, you're creating more traffic in other areas instead of having people go through SW 7th Street. For example, they will go through 6th Street, 5th Street or 4th Street. You have to get the flow of traffic coming in and out of Brickell somehow.
- Comment: The problem is really Brickell not Little Havana. What should happen is that businesses on Brickell should start at 10 a.m. in the morning rather than 9 a.m. or 8 a.m. They should shift worktimes so it spreads the traffic impact. The reason Little Havana suffers is because all the businesses want to open at the same time. I grew up in Rochester, New York, where 76,000 people worked at Eastman-Kodak. There was no way, even if they ran three shifts a day, they could deal with the traffic. Every 30 minutes there was a new shift starting at Eastman-Kodak to accommodate the road situation. Why is it that everybody on Brickell starts at the same time and shuts down at the same time? Why can't they look at shift timing?

- Comment: You don't have to have it mandated by the government because smart businesses, and there are a lot of them on Brickell, will figure it out by themselves.
- Comment: If it causes too much of a problem, it's actually a good problem, because we will have people moving back to the cities and stop loading the air with pollution because of their commute. The problem here is not just how we design two streets, it's about livability in Miami in general, and who you are designing the streets for.
- Comment: It's also a matter of prioritizing. The main priority with these streets should be the people who live and work in Little Havana, the business owners and the pedestrians. The people who are using it as a thoroughfare to get through are just using this road to get where they want to go. That's the key - you're using a neighborhood street to get to your destination.
- Comment: That's because it's not just a corridor, it's a national treasure district.
- Comment: That's why I'm saying we need to prioritize. We need to look at these corridors as the transportation arteries for this neighborhood. The first users are the people who live here and who have businesses here. The people who are trying to get from Westchester to Brickell may be users, but they are not part of the community. This is not where they get their groceries, pick up their children from school, go to the park, or to go to the local bars and restaurants. These are the people that are using it daily.
- Comment: The city planners were not thinking about what's happening on Brickell, so the only options they have left are SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street. It took me two hours to get to Biscayne Boulevard into a building because of the bicycle lane, the bridge opening, and everything else.
- Comment: I think this is a good alternative and I suggest doing this for SW 8th Street as well. Since SW 8th Street is wider, maybe you could add some one-way parking and wider sidewalks. That would be a good alternative for SW 8th Street.
- Question: What do you think of the buses?
- Comment: The buses will be mixed in with the traffic.
- Vilma Croft: Do you have any concerns that the traffic might use parallel roads and go into SW 6th Street? At the end of the day, these people want to get home and they are going to get home in the quickest way they can.
- Comment: That is inevitable. I "live" on the roads every day. I've lived in Los Angeles as well. I just said, "Okay, I work 7 miles from my house. Let me have good music in my car a good podcast to listen to." That's part of city living - case closed. You know traffic is bad. We all must live with it. We're all adults and you should not have road rage. Get empowered by the culture you

know, listen to some great music and deal with it. Or. You can take the bus, walk or find work closer to where you live and that's it.

Comment: I take the bus to work.

Comment: If you're going to go from three lanes to two lanes and you're taking one lane of traffic, then you'll be killing the businesses on SW 8th Street.

Question: Do both roads have to be the same?

Comment: No, SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street don't have to be the same. Right now, what they are proposing is a two-lane, two-way option and a two-lane, one-way option.

Question: Could you ask us if we want a two-lane, one-way option?

Question: Then could you eliminate the two-lane, two-way option?

Comment: Could the group request that option?

Comment: That's what she's saying. We'd have a two-lane option and a three-lane option.

Vilma Croft: We started with a two-lane option.

Comment: You're suggesting a two-way, two-lane option. Now we are talking about a two-lane, one-way option. I think the PAG seems to like this.

Vilma Croft: You mean Instead of the two-lane, two-way option?

Comment: Please raise your hands if you prefer the two-lane, one-way option.

Vilma Croft: Are you saying that this would replace the two-lane, two-way option?

Comment: No, why would you replace the two-way option?

Vilma Croft: Taking away a travel lane is something that we'd have to analyze. It poses safety concerns.

Comment: The reason they're asking to drop one lane is for safety reasons.

Question: What is the safety you're looking at?

Comment: We are talking about the safety of pedestrians.

Comment: Yes, we don't care about the cars.

Comment: The first option we looked at had one lane of traffic in either direction; is that right? On SW 8th Street, we have two lanes going out and two lanes coming; is that correct? How is that any different than having two lanes next to each other?

Vilma Croft: What I'm saying is, we should have one two-lane option and one three-lane option.

Comment: We don't want a three-lane option.

Comment: I agree. We don't want a three-lane option.

Vilma Croft: At the last meeting there was a group that wanted to eliminate the two-way option.

Comment: I really like this and I think a lot of other people do.

Vilma Croft: Okay, we will replace the two-way, two-lane option with this one.

Comment: No, can we keep both options and, at the end of the discussion, at least we can say we decided on six alternatives. Then, let's see if we can narrow down two more, so that would result in four options. If the end result is to have four options, let's at least keep that one on the table. When we're down to four options we can vet them further.

Comment: May I ask a question? This goes back, but I don't think we ever arrived at the conclusion in this PAG that we would end up with two options. That's why people are now asking for other options. We've never agreed to two options. I understand you have a project, you have a timeline and you want to narrow it down to one solution. You do your schematics and you move ahead, but people here are still not comfortable with two options. That's where we are right now.

Vilma Croft: Yes, I understand, thank you. I would also say that there are people here that are not ready to give up the three-lane option.

Comment: Those people are not stakeholders in Little Havana.

Vilma Croft: Yes, they are stakeholders as well.

Comment: One point that was brought up at the last meeting is that the people that pay taxes are the businesses and they have a stake in this.

Comment: Residents pay taxes as well.

- Comment: They don't pay taxes to the same degree that businesses do.
- Comment: Business owners pay more taxes than residents. The ones carrying the burden are the business owners.
- Comment: I think that is really inappropriate for you to say.
- Comment: I'm not saying that you don't pay taxes.
- Comment: I think that it is ridiculous for you to say that business owners pay more and, therefore, we deserve to have a larger say.
- Comment: No, what we are saying is that we also have a stake in this. I think she said that we don't have a stake in this.
- Comment: It's not right for you to say you pay more in taxes.
- Comment: We do pay more, it's a fact.
- Comment: I'm sorry, but the point we're trying to figure out is: how many options are we moving ahead with? The consultant said at the beginning of this meeting that we have two options. I don't remember deciding on two options. I think we should look at your option as well as the other options. Why should we be stuck with these options because of a timeline or a budget? This is a street that is going to stay here for many, many years. We need to look at everything that you feel strongly about and that's the point.
- Comment: I would like to ask the FDOT if it's okay to narrow it down to an option for a two-way, two-lane alternative and an option for a one-way, two-lane alternative. I think instead of replacing it, we can keep it and then explore the three-lane, one-way alternative instead of having just two options. It's okay to have three options. Then, we can put these three options side-by-side and look at them together.
- Comment: I also think that all of these options should not be focused on turning SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street into driveways in and out of Brickell. We should be recommending the best solutions for the quality of life along the right of way. This is not about expediting traffic. The business owners in Brickell should be aware that they have to deal with the fact that the density is too high for the capacity to get in and out of Brickell. They have no right to indenture Little Havana to servitude because they happen to be in buildings that have more people than can be accommodated on these narrow streets for two hours in the morning and two hours at night. We should not destroy the neighborhood for four hours a day. We need to put the responsibility on the business owners in Brickell to create work shifts for the traffic demand, not to destroy SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street.

Comment: A few minutes ago, everyone got upset because a gentleman made a comment about the business owners paying more taxes. What you are doing is just the opposite. You're saying the residents should have more of a say than the business owners. I don't think that's fair either. I think the business owners in Little Havana can come up with a solution along with the residents that would work well.

What scares me the most about the whole thing are the unintended consequences that will happen. You say the cars are not going to go off into the residential neighborhoods, but I disagree. I sell cars for a living so I know nothing about civil engineering, but I think it's going to happen. I see it happening now. I have to cut through Coral Gables in the morning. I see it happening on Miracle Mile. Very little change on Miracle Mile has caused havoc, not only on all of the area around it, but also to the business owners. I constantly get phone calls from residents on The Roads that are upset because my team members are driving through their neighborhood. They're upset because we've increased the volumes of traffic and we're just one business. Can you imagine what the repercussion would be if you take away a whole lane of traffic from 4:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. and spread that traffic through neighborhoods in the area? That's what scares me.

Question: That was my question – do both streets have to be the same?

Vilma Croft: SW 8th Street is a little different. SW 7th Street does not have parking. Whether we want to look at a two-lane option or keep it as a three-lane street, that's what we are going to discuss now. The slide illustrates what the existing typical section is right now. There are three lanes of traffic, parking on both sides and sidewalks. What would you like to change it to?

Comment: It would be great if it was just the cars, but we have these huge tour buses that are blocking lanes and not parking correctly.

Comment: You can't even go to lunch at a restaurant because of all the tourists packed in there.

Comment: As a tour guide in Little Havana, it's embarrassing that there are tour groups that don't even want to cross the street because the only official crosswalks are right there on domino plaza around 15th, 13th and 17th Avenues. It's embarrassing when they are shocked by the speeding vehicles.

Vilma Croft: Can we focus on the typical section now?

Comment: I would recommend a similar option of the two-lane option we have for SW 7th Street for SW 8th Street. Eliminate one lane, add a bike lane, leave two lanes of parking and widen the sidewalks.

Comment: You should also lower the speed limit.

Comment: I agree with all of that.

Vilma Croft: The speed limit right now is 30 miles per hour (mph). Honestly, when I've driven on SW 8th Street, I've never been able to drive faster than 30 mph.

Comment: People speed on SW 8th Street.

Vilma Croft: Maybe they speed late at night, but I've never been able to go faster than 30 mph.

Question: Would the bike lanes be buffered, would they just be 5 feet wide?

Vilma Croft: Buffered bike lanes have to be at least 7 feet wide.

Comment: We could have the bike lanes protected by parallel parking, like they do in New York.

Comment: Can't we put the bike lane on 6th, 5th or 4th Street instead of SW 8th Street or SW 7th Street?

Vilma Croft: You could, but if you're taking your bike to go to the grocery store you're not going to go to 6th Street to come back to SW 8th Street. You're really not identifying a place for the bikes.

Comment: We have another important issue - Pablo Canton is also really big on this - all of us who have walked on Calle Ocho know, if you don't provide a safe bike lane, people will be riding their bikes on the sidewalk. It doesn't matter that it's prohibited, I have seen people being bumped into by bicyclists.

Vilma Croft: If you take a travel lane out to put a buffered bike lane in, the bike lane would be 7 feet wide and you would have 4 feet left.

Comment: Could you move the bike lane to the other side of the parking – on the curbside?

Vilma Croft: It doesn't matter where it is.

Comment: Could you reduce the travel lanes to 10 feet and add a buffer for the bike lane?

Vilma Croft: No, we couldn't do that.

Question: Why not?

Vilma Croft: We already established that the minimum for the travel lanes is 11 feet. Those are the FDOT's guidelines.

Comment: Could the tree well be reduced to three feet?

- Comment: If we had a 7-foot bike lane which provides for 4-foot bike lane plus a 3-foot buffer between the parallel parking and the bike lane, would that work?
- Comment: Unfortunately, bike lanes on the side of the travel lanes have to be buffered.
- Comment: Why not? In New York it's all over like that.
- Comment: We use the FDOT guidelines in Miami.
- Comment: Those are the kinds of regulations the FDOT has that do not apply to "Complete Streets." They have not applied Complete Streets to the regulations. These are the regulations that are establishing Miami and South Florida as one of the most dangerous places in the country.
- Comment: This especially pertains to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Comment: We are one of the top three deadliest cities.
- Comment: Could we put a tree behind the cars? You know, like bulb outs? It would not be shown on the typical section.
- Vilma Croft: I'm hearing one of the things you are looking at is, a sidewalk that is wider on one side than it is on the other side. Do you think there would be an issue with the business owners on the side with the narrower sidewalk?
- Comment: I think the bigger problem and greater concern is the disruption of businesses during construction. If you start widening the sidewalk, breaking up and re-building sidewalks, there will be a lot of disruption. Businesses will be affected like they have been on Flagler Street. People seem to forget what's happening on Flagler Street.
- Vilma Croft: Yes, if you are widening the sidewalks, you'll be adding drainage.
- Comment: Most importantly, it's pretty historic to talk about construction on more than 150 to 200 feet. If we go with this option, you would have to go block-by-block. Other communities have done it. Just because the Gables didn't do it and Flagler Street is a nightmare, doesn't mean it has to happen here. You can build it into the construction contract, then they can only work on very small chunks at a time. The point has been made with Flagler Street.
- Comment: I agree. We should never use the company that is doing the construction on Flagler Street again.
- Comment: It would be better if you removed one side of parking. You'd have two travel lanes, a bike lane, a parking lane, and wider sidewalks with trees on both sides.

Vilma Croft: We discussed that in the last meeting and it was a big concern. It would depend on which side of the street your business is on.

Comment: Personally, that would be my preference.

Comment: I want to add one thing. I've been collecting information about different construction practices that have been utilized throughout the United States. Some have minimized the effects on businesses closing down due to construction projects. Just because the FDOT or the company that's constructing Flagler Street went about it in a certain way, we can educate ourselves and learn about other construction methods. Instead of just saying we don't want that to happen, we can start advocating and going to the FDOT and say we've explored these construction methods and we think this will be minimally invasive on the businesses. Are you willing to work with us on that?

Another aspect is, many studies say when you have a walkable community you have Complete Streets. At the end of the day, business revenue does not only depend on the number of parking spaces that are available on the street. There is evidence that sometimes the removal of parking and incorporating more walkability within the community actually increases business revenue. I'm starting to collect all this information so we can empower residents and business owners before they lead by passion, to really become educated. I am advocating for everybody to try to come up with a unified vision whether it's taking out a lane or adding a lane. If everyone comes to a consensus that it is best for the community, the environment, and Little Havana. As long as we are doing it appropriately, that's the best we can do.

Comment: We've already seen a huge increase in people since the Uber apps were invented. Projecting into the future, we're only going to see an increase in the use of those apps for shopping. Instead of commuting, people can use public transportation. People will think, "If I have to get my Halloween costume at La Casa De los Trucos, I'll just take an Uber that will leave me there. I'll go and get dinner down the street, and then I'll take my Uber back instead of dealing with traffic."

Comment: Forget about Uber, people need parking. They don't want to pay for Uber.

Comment: Do you know how many people are ditching their cars in Miami because they are using Uber? What do you mean, they don't want to pay for Uber?

Comment: You're making assumptions.

Comment: I'm not making assumptions. I'm telling you the numbers are there. The papers are saying people are ditching their cars.

Comment: What I'm saying is that you need to have parking for the businesses on SW 8th Street. Taxis existed a long time before Uber and people still wanted to park their cars to shop. They did not take a cab.

Comment: Is the next step in your study process to evaluate the two-lane option and the three-lane option against the evaluation criteria you showed us at an earlier meeting, including safety, traffic projections, pedestrians, construction impacts and other factors? Does this mean you'll study the two-lane option and the three-lane option for SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street and then bring back your evaluations to show us how all of those factors weigh out?

Vilma Croft: Yes, that is correct.

Comment: I think your suggestion of rebuilding the curb on only on one side is great. My question is, would you be doing it on the side that has the buffered bike lane or will you be doing it on the other side?

Vilma Croft: The way it is right now, we would rebuild one side because it's wider. The other side would be left as it exists. The question we had was, would some of the businesses have an issue with which side it was on?

Comment: We also talked about the possibility of, every so many parking spaces, doing a tree bulb out.

Vilma Croft: The pedestrian safety project is doing just that. At the last meeting, no one wanted to remove any parking. That always becomes an issue when we say, "Sure, remove some of the parking." Then we hear from some of the other businesses and they don't want it taken out.

Question: Can we please discuss the parking with bulb outs at this meeting?

Vilma Croft: Do you mean we should reduce the parking by half?

Comment: No, what he is saying is something like, "For every four or five spaces you would plant a tree."

Vilma Croft: What I am saying is, the pedestrian safety project is putting in mid-block pedestrian crossings. These blocks are not that long.

Comment: What we are asking is, if in addition to what you are doing with the safety project, could we have bulb outs with trees?

Vilma Croft: I will go back and look at it this option. The blocks are not very long, so mid-block pedestrian crossings end up moving one parking space every four to five spaces. If you want to put landscaping in, it would be fine; however, it still comes out to removing one parking space every four or five spaces.

Question: How often will pedestrians be crossing?

Vilma Croft: This project will not be changing the pedestrian safety project.

Comment: The question is, “Is what you’re talking about happening on every block?”

Vilma Croft: I would need to go back and check. That’s not my project, but I can check.

Question: Will you look at the study to see whether we can actually cross at crosswalks rather than at mid-block?

Vilma Croft: You will be able to cross at both. There will still be crosswalks at the intersections.

Comment: The safety project is adding four crosswalks. It might be useful at the next meeting to have a copy of the safety project plans.

Vilma Croft: Are there any more comments? We will include a three-lane option and we’ll bring the existing configurations to the next meeting. Thank you for your participation and input.

END OF MEETING SUMMARY

This meeting summary is not a word-for-word transcript; it is a summary of the comments. If you feel that clarifications are necessary, or if this differs from your understanding, please notify Eileen LaSeur by telephone at 407-883-8257 or by email at eileen.laseur@qcausa.com within five (5) working days upon receipt of this summary.



SW 8th Street/SW 7th Street PD&E Study from SR 9/SW 27th Avenue to SR 5/US 1/Brickell Avenue
 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, Miami-Dade County, Florida
 Financial Project ID No.: 432639-6-22-01, ETDM No.: 14230, FAP No.: 0202 054P



PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP (PAG) MEETING # 3- February 16, 2017 - SIGN-IN SHEET

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