



Project Advisory Group Meeting No. 4

Date: Thursday, March 23, 2017
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 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 continuing discussions about the proposed project alternatives and the engineering, environmental, socioeconomic and cost factors that will be considered in selecting a recommended alternative.

Comment: I know there was a meeting prior to this. We all received an email. If anyone here doesn't have copies of that email, I have some printed copies you can have. Before we move forward, I think there needs to be a discussion about the obvious "elephant in the room," how we're going to move forward and what that entails.

Vilma Croft: I have a status update on the project, so I think we should go through that first.

Comment: I think we should have a consensus from everybody here, and I'm on board to do whatever is decided. Do we want an update on the status of the project to see what they've come up with so far?

Comment: How is the status from one month to another any different, if they are not listening to our comments and concerns?

Vilma Croft: At the last Project Advisory Group (PAG) meeting, we looked at the alternatives. We started with four alternatives that had been selected during the previous study. The second PAG meeting looked at the pros and cons of the four alternatives. Those alternatives removed parking, but parking is important to this group. The third PAG meeting looked at the elements of the typical section, and we discussed alternatives including a two-lane, one-way alternative that received consensus from the group. We revised the typical sections and they became the alternatives we have now. When you say we are not listening, can you be more specific? We developed a typical section with the PAG interactively, and we looked at the elements the group felt were important. That's how we developed the typical sections we have to show you today. The plan was to go over the pros and cons of the typical sections to start the discussion. This is all part of the analysis. It is not how we are going to select the alternatives. We will be looking at the existing conditions: the drainage and the traffic signals. We know maintenance

of traffic is very important to this group. The best alternative is the existing three-lane alternative. Once you touch the sidewalks; whether you widen them by two feet or three feet, the drainage is impacted. When you impact the drainage, you may need an additional length of pipe and you will need new drainage structures. The more changes you make to the existing configuration, the more construction impacts you will have. If you change the traffic flow, you will need new signals. These are all things we have been discussing. It's what we call the "purpose and need" for the project. You define the purpose and need and develop alternatives that will meet that purpose and need. That's how the process works.

Comment: If I may interrupt you. I think the problem is that there is not a consensus. We haven't determined our vision of what the purpose of this project is. Since we didn't do that, starting from scratch as a group, we don't have the leadership and we don't all have the same vision to move this process forward. Does everyone agree with that? It's as if we were put into this advisory group and the process was just rolling along without using our advice. I think you have to get things done in a certain amount of time, but, as an advisory group, we may need to have more time -- more time to talk, more time to look at the construction mitigation and impacts of every single build alternative. We might not be able to have that time within these two-hour meetings. The big voice is that we need a little more guidance, a little more facilitation and more moderation.

Question: Was this decided at the last meeting by the PAG only? Because I might have missed that email summarizing what came out of that meeting. The first thing I saw was an email speaking for the PAG to the FDOT. Is that right? Was there another email saying "Hey guys, this is what we did and this is what we decided as a group?"

Comment: The size of this group is a pretty good representation.

Comment: So I can surmise, if I missed that meeting, what I should know is what you sent today?

Comment: Yes.

Comment: One of the concerns most people have, whether they are for a two-lane, a three-lane, a one-way, or a two-lane two-way alternative, is we want to know what the consequences are for each of these alternatives. What happens if you have a two-lane alternative; what happens if you have a three-lane alternative; and what happens if you have a two-way with one lane going each direction? I think one of the concerns everyone has is that we need an analysis. We need to see what the consequences are for of each of these, and not just for safety. If you only look at safety, then you should take out all of the lanes and make a walkway for people to walk. What people need to see is, what happens to the businesses in the area, what is the economic impact, what happens to safety, what happens to traffic flow? What I see does not help me because it doesn't say these will be the business impacts, these are the pedestrian impacts, this would be the impacts to traffic flow, and these are the impacts that would spillover.

Comment: We also need information about construction times.

Comment: Construction times would impact local businesses. For example, we had a meeting a couple of weeks ago at Miami High. I could not find the entrance to Miami High. It took me about 10 minutes to find the entrance to the parking lot, and then I couldn't find the entryway. There are businesses on Flagler Street that have closed. They had been there for decades. What concerns me is what impacts will there be to the businesses on SW 8th Street and the residents on SW 7th Street? What impact will this have on spillover traffic to other areas if we reduce the amount of lanes? What happens to pedestrians? I would like to know the facts because I have an opinion as to what could happen and others have a different opinion. Maybe we could have an analysis of what would happen in different scenarios, such as what would happen to the economy or taxes, so people would have a better understanding. Then they could say, "Maybe the two-lane alternative isn't the best option. Maybe the three-lane alternative is the best." You're talking about construction and that's one aspect of it, but I would like to know also about safety, businesses and pedestrians. What happens to them?

Vilma Croft: We don't have some of that information yet. We are completing what we call the "existing traffic" where we do the traffic forecasting. That's the first part of the traffic analysis. We find out what the traffic projections are, with the existing conditions, until 2045. Once we complete the existing conditions, then we move into the build alternatives. We showed you the existing conditions at the second meeting. We showed how we measure the traffic flow in A, B, C, D, or F level of service (LOS). That's the standard practice. We showed you that with existing traffic patterns, some of the intersections within the project are already at an "F" or failing condition.

Comment: One of the biggest problems we have in Little Havana is pedestrians being hit by a car. That's one of the issues, and you say that pedestrians are safe. It doesn't make sense.

Vilma Croft: I understand, but we must follow the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) process whether you agree with it or not. I'm sorry, but that's the process that must be followed by all transportation projects. It's not something we just came up with and said, "For SW 8th Street we're going to use this." As part of the safety analysis, we look at all the crashes. We have not started the safety analysis because the crashes for 2015 are not available yet. Once they become available we will look at that. We look at pedestrian crashes and whether it was a night crash or a day crash, an intersection crash or a mid-walk crash. Because safety is so important, the FDOT decided they did not want to wait until the end of the study to put in the mid-block pedestrian crossings as a safety measure. We look at crashes and not just the cars. The purpose and need for this project was developed during the previous planning study, which lasted two years. That study looked at safety data from crashes dated 2010 to 2013. Based on that information, they developed this project. This project was not arbitrarily chosen. We have not completed the traffic analysis yet. There are three congested travel lanes now. If you take a lane away, you don't have to make an in-depth analysis to understand that when

you take a lane, congestion is only going to get worse. The main type of vehicle crash we have in this segment right now is rear-end, and we have pedestrian deaths which we are looking at very seriously.

Comment: The reason is because people are going too fast.

Comment: The problem we see is something you mentioned a minute ago. You are from the Department of Transportation and transportation is not only about cars. There is a wide range of issues that will arise from this project, not only in terms of construction, but also with pedestrians, businesses, community, etc. If you start with the traffic volumes and the way traffic moves, you are not looking at anything else. Which means, you infuse things into the project after you have made a decision about the way the cars move. That's a problem. Second is what you said just now about how the FDOT has a way of doing things. That is true. You also have Chapter 23, Section 4, "Justification for central office approval of exceptions and variations." You have not even brought that up. I think we agree that Calle Ocho is unique and has nothing to do with the Turnpike, which is a typical FDOT road. Chapter 23 says a strong case can be made for justification if: "The required criteria is not applicable to the site specific conditions," and second, "The project can be as safe by not following the criteria set by FDOT." In this case, having so many modes of transportation moving through SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street could give us a reason to have this one also checked. The last one, and most important, "The environmental or community needs prohibit meeting the criteria set by FDOT." I think we can all agree that this is a very important community with very important businesses that need to move in and out of the right of way. Some of the criteria applied by the FDOT would probably not apply. I could keep on reading.

Vilma Croft: I am familiar with that chapter.

Comment: Yes, I'm sure you know. I'm just surprised that in this whole process, you as an FDOT PM, with an advisory committee that doesn't have much expertise on how FDOT operates, have not offered the option to have variances and exceptions to these set regulations. All I have heard in all these meetings, and correct me if someone heard something else, is "this is the way the FDOT does it," and this is why "these trees (my pet peeve) cannot be on the edge of the pavement." For a unique street like this, why can't the FDOT do a variation or exception in this case?

Vilma Croft: Maybe I did say the first thing we reviewed was traffic, but we also showed you the analysis for multimodal options. I saw you had concerns. I did not bring my traffic engineer tonight but he has explained the multimodal level of service analysis the FDOT does. I'm sorry if I said we first conduct the traffic analysis. We do the multimodal analysis as well. In response to your variations and exceptions, yes that can be an option. For example 11-foot lanes is a variation. The FDOT's preference is a 12-foot lane. You already have a corridor that has variations in it. The trees are something we will look at once a preferred alternative has been selected. We

cannot do that detailed analysis until we choose an alternative or a concept. Then we will look at the design elements. The exceptions and variations are for design. The width of the lane or sidewalk and where we put the trees is something we will look at once we have an alternative. That's how the process works.

Question: How can we choose an alternative if you don't show us all the best possible options?

Vilma Croft: First, we need to look at the big picture: three lanes, two lanes, one way, two ways, etc. Once that decision is made, we can move on. That's how the process works.

Comment: That does not make sense. Why do you only show us what would happen on the alternative we choose? Why don't you show us the options of what would happen with each of those alternatives? Some people might have a preference for one design or another, and if you are saying that you won't show us the other options, you are not giving those people the information they need to make a decision. I have a question, how far back does the FDOT go with these analyses and what does the FDOT use to compare the streets? Do they use apples and oranges, or do they use apples and apples? Do they compare the three-lane traffic on a highway in Chicago versus what's going to happen in Miami? Do they compare a street in Miami with another street in Miami? Do they include the environment, the community and the historical data and say that the population in a given corridor only grew 1.5% and that's how traffic volumes are developed?

Vilma Croft: The program we use for multimodal studies is Artplan. I wish Carlos was here to explain it more.

Comment: Again, you are proving the argument we had. You are not an expert in all of the things that are going on with this project. The FDOT and all the analysts should be here sitting at this table with us so these questions could be answered to help us make the correct decisions.

Vilma Croft: My traffic engineer has been at every PAG meeting. Today we did not have any traffic information to present. If I had known you wanted to discuss this, I would have brought him in.

Comment: Well, that's the FDOT. They are in charge of traffic. How can you not have the person here that is in charge of traffic?

Comment: I don't have any problems with the team. I think it's the process we have a problem with. The bulk of this project is in Little Havana. I know that many care about Little Havana, but there is a section of this project that has not been touched upon at all, and that's the Brickell section. That's part of your scope. There is a set policy about pedestrian zones in Brickell that is different from Little Havana. It's adopted by the city and it's adopted by the county. There are speed limits and all sorts of things that have been codified by the city and county, and we

haven't seen anything about that in these meetings. Little Havana should take a look at the things that are already in place. We have people in this room that are strong advocates for the community, and if we want to look at a safer corridor we need to look at policies that have already been adopted.

Comment: If we want to see a safer corridor we'll need to remove all the streets.

Comment: You have to conduct an analysis to show the cause and effect. That's what we have been asking for from the very beginning. We need to see all the different options to see what is going to happen with each of these scenarios. There are people here that have a strong opinion about putting safety as tantamount. If that is the case, we need to see what the cause and effect is. What is going to happen with each of these options? You can't go from one option to another without knowing the full analysis of what would happen; not just with pedestrians and safety, but with businesses and spillover traffic. We need to know the options and the cause and effect of each option. If you're saying you're only going give us one option and then you are going to do the analysis . . .

Vilma Croft: What I said is elements, such as where the trees will go, is something that will be looked at later. In terms of variation, which are design elements, that's detail information. Now in terms of cars and multimodal level of service, that is something we are going to do for each of the build alternatives. In terms of businesses, we don't do that analysis. You mentioned taxes and that is something else the department does not do.

Comment: They should assign the right department to work on a commercial street. The city works with pedestrians, businesses, land use, bicycles, driveways and parking. The FDOT looks at vehicles.

Vilma Croft: The FDOT analyzes engineering and environmental factors for each of the alternatives. The engineering evaluations review multimodal levels of service, cost, drainage, sidewalks and other elements. An environmental analysis looks at the natural and physical environment. The natural environment includes wetlands (not much of that in this project), air and noise. Endangered species are evaluated, again, not much of that in this project unless we touch the Miami River. All of the alternatives will be evaluated with the same factors. There are three elements of a PD&E study: engineering, environmental and public involvement. The PAG, evaluating the pros and cons of each alternative, and listening to what's important to local residents and businesses, is part of the public involvement. We had an alternative that took out the parking. You told us parking is important, so we developed the alternative with parking. This is all part of the public involvement. We are not going to select an alternative because everyone raises their hands and tells me we like three lanes. That is not how it's going to be. We look at cultural resources. Little Havana has multiple buildings that are over 50 years old, and we are doing an analysis on that. Every alternative is going to be analyzed with the same factors. We will select one alternative that best that meets the purpose and need, and

mitigates the impacts. Then we will develop that alternative further with details such as trees and where they will be placed.

Comment: A lot of us are very frustrated. If I'm wrong, somebody correct me. When you state what the FDOT does and we express our concerns for the business entities, as you've just told us, we've been playing along with the initial step. You know when we get further along we'll get into different design details. We just heard from you that you have no criteria and you have no consideration for the businesses, that it's not part of your process. So, if these businesses that have been there for generations, for 50 years, created from scratch, hard work and sweat of the people that live there, then the FDOT has no consideration. But you have to, because this is not a road you are building at the end of Tamiami Trail or close to the Miccosukee lands where no one is going to be impacted. Here you have human beings that have sacrificed their entire life to establish a business, and they will not be taken into consideration in your study. We cannot accept what's happening on Flagler Street, and you tell us that is not part of your study, we'll take care of this-and-that later. It is something we are all very concerned about. I'm a resident and I live on 6th Street and 14th. The traffic will impact me as a resident, but I value our businesses. I value our Little Havana, what we have created and the brand we have. All of that is due to those businesses, the mom and pop shops, and you tell me the FDOT has no consideration. Then, you know what? The FDOT has to adapt to what works for us and for our community. I know your main concern is alleviating the traffic to and from Brickell, but, to us, it's our neighborhood, our street and making sure our kids don't get hit by a car because people are speeding. We have to make sure that our culture, our Little Havana and our little businesses don't get destroyed. I don't see anything about that. All you say is the FDOT does not take care of this or that and let's move on.

Vilma Croft: What I said is we need to pick an alternative, based on the vision that the community has. Not to pick an alternative based on the maintenance of traffic. If we did not care about the businesses, I would not be here. I have a family at home. We can do the engineering and the environmental analysis from a computer at the office.

Comment: Vilma, are you here for free because you love Little Havana or are you here because the FDOT pays you to do your job? Please don't make a statement like that. None of us are getting paid to be here. We are here because we live here, we work here, and we are going to make sure the FDOT doesn't just do what it wants this time.

Vilma Croft: I could be payed sitting in my office with my air conditioner and my laptop. What I'm saying is public involvement is part of the study. I did not say I don't care about the businesses. For example, for the FDOT, parking creates friction with the moving vehicles and it's not always safe, but it's something that the businesses need. What I said is the FDOT does not look at property taxes. That is not an FDOT function, it is part of the city and county. When the gentleman mentioned taxes, I said it is not something the FDOT looks at.

Comment: You're saying the FDOT is concerned with businesses. How can they go to Flagler Street and just sit there while your subcontractor takes its sweet time and all these businesses close down. I don't see that issue being addressed and exactly the same thing will happen on SW 8th Street. You cannot go from 4th Avenue to 27th Avenue, tear out the entire street, ruin our tourism, ruin our Little Havana, ruin our cultural Fridays and our weekends. Once the businesses go away, they are not going to come back. Once the businesses shut down, they are not going to reopen. You say you look at businesses, well, it doesn't look like that on Flagler Street.

Vilma Croft: I'm not working on the Flagler Street project, but I understand the issues with that project.

Comment: If the FDOT was really serious about this, someone would come in from high up and say, "We are concerned about what's happening on Flagler Street and we're going to make sure it's not going to happen on SW 8th Street, and these are the steps that are going to be in place so that it does not happen." No one from the FDOT at a higher level than you seems to care about anything because they don't come to these meetings.

Vilma Croft: You first have to decide what needs to be done on the project before we can do the maintenance of traffic. We have to complete the analysis on the drainage first. We don't know if the drainage needs to be replaced so we can't do the maintenance of traffic until after the drainage analysis is completed. I can't tell you what will happen with the traffic because it isn't finished. I can't show you what would happen with the two-lane alternative.

Comment: I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about someone coming here and telling us something simple, like you're putting precautions in place. That you're going to make sure there will be penalties in the bid, and you're going to establish a time schedule and then make sure you share it with all the businesses on SW 8th Street. We need to know you're going to take a section from 17th to 15th, complete that and then move to the next section. Something simple that has nothing to do about whether you're going to do the drainage or not, or do the streets, or do the trees. Just an assurance of the process and how you are going to do the project. I'm sorry, you may not have anything to do with Flagler Street, but you are right here. You are representing the FDOT for us. We need to have someone here that can give us that assurance.

Vilma Croft: We aren't at that point yet. We have to go through two more phases before we get to the construction bidding. At that time, you will be able to get more specifics about how the construction will be done. The little I know of the Flagler Street project is they had to replace the water main. It depends on the type of project, so I can't give you the facts unless we know the complete scope of the project.

Comment: The FDOT has the tools. The FDOT has complete streets policies and design standards so you can pull from all that to come up with a good design for SW 8th Street and SW 7th Street. You have the tools to provide a context sensitive design. Let's establish that. Second, my concern

when we look at these sections is the “one size fits all” mentality. When you look at this corridor you should identify different character areas. Maybe the solution is not a “one size fits all,” and where there may be parking in some areas there may not be parking in others. It’s not going to be a continuous exact section throughout. I think you really have to look at the different character segments of the corridor and identify them, and then you start evaluating the different options. What are the different design elements that can come into play when you are looking at the different segments of the corridor?

Vilma Croft: Looking at parking is something that’s desirable to the community. You also need to look at the businesses and what type of businesses they are.

Comment: I’m not talking about parking alone. I’m talking about the bigger picture of looking at the corridor and evaluating context areas so you respond to different areas in different ways.

Vilma Croft: Are you saying you might have a segment with two lanes and another segment with three lanes? Something like that? The reason I ask is, because in order to have a wider sidewalk you have to remove a lane. I understand you are looking at pedestrian features, but for that you have to remove parking or remove a travel lane. That’s what I’m trying to clarify.

Comment: When you have a context-sensitive approach to the corridor, then you design accordingly, and what you’re saying is completely not in touch with that.

Vilma Croft: I understand what you are saying. In doing the traffic analysis and the multimodal level of service that would be done by segments.

Comment: The whole project - whether it’s the business, the activities, or the pedestrians - it’s not a “one size fits all.”

Vilma Croft: I understand, but in order to add those improvements, something has to go.

Comment: I wanted to ask you, were you informed about the letter that we sent to Mr. Wolfe, the District Secretary?

Vilma Croft: Yes, I saw it.

Comment: You saw it - then I think we need to acknowledge that. All of us here are have no confidence in your part or in the part of your team. I think this represents something to us and to you. I don’t know if you have informed the FDOT Project Manager in charge of this project about the situation we have had up to this point, have you?

Vilma Croft: Yes, I received the email.

Comment: I'm not talking about the email, I'm talking about the department.

Vilma Croft: The email Michael sent was received about 10 minutes before I had to leave. The FDOT Project Manager was copied on that email.

Comment: I'm talking about the issue that we have where the community has a problem with your presentation, the analysis and the design.

Vilma Croft: If that's true, it's news to me. Honestly.

Comment: I've come to three or four meetings and we are having the same discussion. You see that the community is having an issue with the project or the design. I think it's your duty as someone who represents this project, as the middle person for us, to inform your superiors or your leaders about this situation. We need to come to an agreement, without you in front of us, at this point. We have no confidence in the terms of your strategy or in bringing this community and this advisory group together. I have a two-year-old and I'd rather be home right now, everybody would. Nobody likes to come to these meetings, but everybody wants something good for this neighborhood. I live here. I grew up here. I have a business here, and many other people have businesses here. This is not an expressway. We are as important as Brickell. We may not be as fancy or luxurious, but we are just as important. We serve this neighborhood, this community and this city every day. You come in here and don't acknowledge what's going on or even try to figure it out. It bothers me and I'm sure it bothers the rest of the group. This room is not set up for an advisory group. The setting for an advisory group is for everyone to work together, not as an audience.

Vilma Croft: We set the tables up this way because we were going to do an activity I had planned for this meeting, which we did not get to do. I had three slides to give you the status of the project, and we were going to break you up into groups to discuss the three alternatives. Unfortunately, we haven't gotten there yet. If you think that I do not address your concerns, I am not the project manager for Flagler Street project.

Comment: I'm not talking about Flagler Street. I'm talking about this group. You had these tables before but we have not had them in this formation.

Vilma Croft: The first meeting was at the Shenandoah Community Center and we had a tables in a U-shape where we all faced each other. We came here because the Miami-Dade College was nice enough to offer this room for our use. It was set up in this format. We had a presentation, and we thought this format was okay when we broke up into groups.

Comment: Last time we set up the room without you. The room was like this, and I took it upon myself to make it boardroom style so we could all sit and be within a group. I would just say that walking into a room and seeing it designed like this didn't seem very cohesive. It should be up to the

consultant to realize that this is an advisory group, and the room set-up should be more unified.

Vilma Croft: That has not been brought up to my attention until now.

Comment: You're the one that's leading the project and it would be respectful to set up the room the way we had requested. We had a workshop where the county set up 20 tables. You're the project manager for this project.

Vilma Croft: Yes I'm the project manager for this project, and, since we had a presentation, we felt this was the better set-up. Today we were going to break up into groups, and we set up the tables to do that. If you set it up in a circle and the presentation is off to one side, it's not the best format.

Comment: Well, I think we'll move this conversation forward. There have been many issues. We have asked for a formal list of the PAG members many times.

Vilma Croft: I brought that up to the FDOT project manager, and she had concerns because I don't have the right to give out personal information. Whenever someone comes in and signs their name, it becomes public information. If someone gives me their contact information to participate in a meeting, I have no right to give away that information. Everything you submit to the FDOT, and I worked for the FDOT for 30 years, becomes public information. However, when it's personal information that someone has given me, then it's up to the FDOT to disclose that information.

Comment: I requested the list in November. Certainly, there's been enough time since November to ask if the list can be given to the PAG members, even something as simple as a list of names. We're not talking about anybody's personal cell phone number. There are no names, only email addresses.

Vilma Croft: Why do I need to give you people's names?

Comment: Excuse me, we are all volunteering our time to work together on something. Our names are on the FDOT Project Manager's list. It's public information.

Vilma Croft: How do I know that everyone is okay with giving out their information and having you contact them? I asked the FDOT Project Manager and she said, "If you walk into a meeting and you sign in on a sheet, that becomes public information."

Luisana Perez, Aide to State Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez: But if you sign that then. . .

Vilma Croft: If you sign in, it's posted as public information. That's not what he wants. . .

Comment: We are talking about a State of Florida Senator who is asking us to serve and having all that information, which is a public document. The fact that our names are in that office with our email list, that is public information. We are not asking for anyone's date of birth or social security number or anything else.

Luisana Perez, Aide to State Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez: I think the list we submitted to you with emails and addresses, is public record. If it comes from my office it is public record.

Comment: I sent you an email two weeks ago stating that a lot of the businesses in the area were not notified. I notified a few of the businesses about this meeting myself because they had not received anything letting them know about it. They need to be involved and come to these meetings, whether it's a business or a person that lives in the area. It's important to everybody here what's going to happen with this construction. I also asked you how far back the data goes to make an analysis, such as what's the benefit of a two-lane alternative versus a three-lane alternative. Do you go back to the SW 8th Street of 40 years ago? How far back do you go with the analysis?

Comment: It's won't be the same number of cars. The traffic is completely different now.

Comment: I'm going to give my closing statement right now. I think, at the end of the day, whether someone wants Calle Ocho to be a highway or they want a community road, whether they're in it for the businesses or as a resident, it does not matter right now. What matters is that moving forward in this process we do not have all the analysis or all the information to make the correct decisions. Whether it's A, B, C or D, we don't have all the tools that we need as a committee. We are just sitting here going back and forth saying this is what we want, this is what FDOT does, this is what we want, this is what FDOT does . . . What we are saying, and you've heard this from different voices, is that this is a historic and unique corridor. This cannot be a "one size fits all" approach. What needs to happen, specifically because of what has happened on the Flagler Street corridor, is we need more time, more consideration and effort. Not just from the people on your team, but for the people you work for at the FDOT who need to be more invested in this project and consider many factors. They are not doing that. I for one don't think I am getting anything useful from this meeting today. I would like specifically to hear from Secretary Wolfe to see how we can move this project forward and whether we need to bring more facilitators in no matter what decision is made. I don't think we'll make it at this meeting. We need to see how the FDOT, the consultant and the PAG will move forward. Right now, with the players that are here, that's not going to happen.

Vilma Croft: We are giving you the information that we have. We cannot give you the results of an analysis or additional traffic information because we do not have it. It isn't finished yet.

Comment: So what you're saying is, you're wanting to move this process along without the correct information we need to have.

Vilma Croft: That is not a correct statement. I'm saying there are three parts to a PD&E study. We have engineering, environmental and public involvement. This is neither the engineering nor the environmental. Can I say something?

Comment: No, Vilma you are repeating yourself. If I hear the three steps of a PD&E one more time I'm going to shoot myself.

Vilma Croft: I don't see how I can give you the maintenance of traffic information until the drainage analysis is completed.

Comment: You're not going to put in 20 blocks of sewer at the same time. You're not putting in 20 blocks of drainage at the same time.

Vilma Croft: I don't know if we'll be putting in sewer because that is Miami-Dade County.

Question: Can we just leave anyway? We sent the letter, that's it.

Comment: When you're doing a design project and you don't know all the outcomes, what you do is look into other places where something similar has been done. You see other places that have three lanes or others that have two.

Comment: My concern is that this is being rushed along. I don't know if you have a budget constraint or any other type of constraint, but we feel that we need to be heard, not just be rushing along.

Vilma Croft: What I'm trying to say is, you are not selecting an alternative. I'm going to do the presentation. Today we wanted to discuss the pros and cons of the three alternatives. Again, this is only a part of the analysis. This is part of the community involvement. I want to know where, for example, you see issues with the two-lane alternative. Again, I know I'm not showing you the maintenance of traffic. I know I'm not showing you where the trees will go. We are engineers and can give you an engineering analysis. We have environmentalists doing the environmental analysis, and all of that information is being documented in an engineering report which will be available to the public. All of that will be completed before a preferred alternative is selected. These meetings are part of the public information process to get your feedback. Based on your feedback, we have made changes to the options. We're going to look at the complete streets and pedestrians. . .

Comment: No, you don't understand.

Vilma Croft: I understand what you're saying.

Comment: No - we are like two computers that have different languages and we're not communicating. We're all getting frustrated because you don't understand what we are saying.

- Vilma Croft: Okay explain it to me. Is what you want to see? The maintenance of traffic?
- Comment: Look, we're not talking about engineering facts.
- Vilma Croft: We're also looking at social and cultural impacts, and we are doing the parks.
- Question: What is the timeline for the studies?
- Vilma Croft: We hope to be done with the engineering analysis in the summer, then we'll have an Alternatives Public Workshop.
- Question: What is the time to decide on an alternative?
- Vilma Croft: In the summer. . .
- Question: In the summer you will have the information for all of the alternatives?
- Vilma Croft: Yes. We'll have analysis for all the alternatives. We will pick two and we'll do the traffic analysis for those two.
- Question: So, in theory, you think we'll have a preferred alternative when?
- Vilma Croft: By the end of the year.
- Question: Can we see the slides?
- Comment: One of the issues we have is the fact we have a two-hour meeting. I've been volunteering my time in these things for 40 years and this is the first time I have not received an agenda packet. There only two hours for these discussions and we have no way to prepare, because you don't give us anything in advance to review.
- Vilma Croft: I sent the agenda with the meeting invite. There is not an agenda packet.
- Question: Why can't you send, what you're going to go over at these meetings, two weeks in advance?
- Vilma Croft: I will plan to do that next time. I've been asked to do a presentation so . . .
- Comment: No, the people who have been assigned to this group are the ones that don't want to listen to this. We are not new here. This is a group that has been assigned. We welcome everybody because everybody has an opinion, but you have to understand the group that has been meeting here all along. So, please, you do it just like her, shoving everything down our throat.

- Comment: I know you all told me that I'm the chair, but I would like to wait and hear from the FDOT before moving forward. I would like to hear from Secretary Wolfe and see what is going to happen, and get better involvement from the FDOT. So I'm adjourning myself and anyone else who wants to adjourn.
- Comment: We're adjourning and ending the meeting for you. Thank you.
- Comment: *(As the majority stand to leave, those sitting down continue to comment.)* I think it's close-minded if you leave now.
- Comment: We are not going to get anything accomplished today, and there are 45 minutes left to present what they were going to present in two hours. Until we have the FDOT say, "This is how we are going to work with you," I don't know. Anyone can stay, but I'm going.
- Comment: Whoever stays, that's their choice. I want to be clear and for it to be in the record that at 6:49 p.m., the PAG group is leaving and won't be present during the presentation. Thank you.
- Vilma Croft: Just to clarify, the PAG is not the entire community. We invite everyone to the major public meetings; mainly, the kick-off meeting, the Alternatives Public Workshop and the Public Hearing. The PAG is meant to be a smaller group that represents the community so we can show them more detailed information. That's why not every business is invited.
- Comment: My concern is that you're going to check a box and . . .
- Vilma Croft: I'm not checking any boxes. You are welcome to stay and look at the alternatives that have been developed. He wants to see the presentation.
- Comment: We are here. Why skip the process?
- Vilma Croft: In this presentation we will look at the pros and cons of a two-lane and a three-lane alternative. *(Part of the group gathers in the back of the room by the exit. Seven people remain seated.)*
- Comment: Please indicate (in the minutes) that there was no quorum, and I did not vote.
- Vilma Croft: You're not voting. The PAG does not vote. Among the alternatives being considered right now we obviously have a "No-Build," which means that no improvements are being done and no money is being spent. It's also called the do-nothing alternative. In the build alternatives being considered now, there is a two-lane, two-way alternative; a two-lane, one-way alternative; and a three-lane, one-way alternative. The alternatives analysis, as I mentioned, looks at engineering and environmental factors. In engineering, we look at safety and access, which has to do with access to businesses. Part of the purpose and need of the project is to look at access for the Brickell area. The I-95 interchange is also part of this project.

Comment: Vilma, what is the purpose and need for this project?

Vilma Croft: The purpose and need is safety, traffic operations, and access to the Brickell area.

Comment: In two of the alternatives that you mentioned - the two-lane, one-way and the two-lane, two-way - that's not going to move traffic. That's just going to create more congestion. The only way to do that is with the three-way like you have now with whatever modifications you do to it.

Vilma Croft: You have people saying that we only look at traffic, and they want sidewalks.

Comment: If we're looking at this until 2045, there's going to be a lot more traffic in 2045, so two lanes are not going to work.

Vilma Croft: If you supported three lanes, you have to make sure that position is known.

Question: Should we put that in writing?

Vilma Croft: Yes, because we have other PAG members who think FDOT only looks at traffic and doesn't want wider sidewalks.

Question: When you say cultural resources what do you mean?

Vilma Croft: We mean anything that is historically significant. Some of the buildings in this area are more than 50 years old.

Question: So businesses are part of the cultural resources?

Vilma Croft: Yes, businesses that are of historical significance, such as landmarks. For example, if you have a historic house and you change the traffic that would be considered an impact. If traffic has been that way for 50 years and now you are going to do something different to access that property, that's an impact.

Question: How do you determine historic?

Vilma Croft: We have a company that actually does cultural resources. These are historians, not engineers.

Comment: I can only speak from personal experience. My business has been there for 45 years, is that considered historic?

Vilma Croft: We do look at the socio-cultural factor, but, for example in a business, when we look at cultural resources, we are looking more at the structure.

Question: What do you look for when you're dealing with a historical landmark?

Vilma Croft: You don't want to impact the structure. You don't want to impact the facility, how you access it, or the functionality of the resource. We don't look at business impacts when we look at cultural resources.

Comment: Again, referring to my business. The name comes from a business in Cuba that was one of the oldest businesses for costumes and jokes in the world. It started in the early 1900's in La Habana Vieja. The business has been in Miami since 1972. One of the buildings we have is already considered a historical preservation building because it has been around for 50 years. The other building is not. Does that meet the criteria for historic and cultural resource?

Comment: If it does, I think he wants to know what would be the cultural impact if you were doing, say, the three way alternative.

Comment: What would I have to do to show that?

Vilma Croft: The one who does the analysis is a historian or an archeological person, so first they look at the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, such as the architecture for example. Those people are doing that assessment right now.

Question: And how can we meet those people?

Vilma Croft: They look at the historical and cultural significance. They are part of the analysis, and they also go over the alternatives. If we were to do the two-lane, two-way option, they would look at those landmarks and determine if this would have an impact.

Question: Can we write to them?

Vilma Croft: They are part of our team. First they will determine all the properties in the corridor that are historically significant. That's the first step, and that report will be available. By summer, we'll be finishing this analysis to go to the Alternatives Public Workshop.

Comment: I think you are going to receive a lot of grief from everybody because the frustration on Flagler Street has taken a toll on everybody. I've lived on Flagler Street and 22nd since 1977 and on Flagler and 11th since 1969. The impact is frustrating people for the project that you want to develop on SW 8th Street. What was the beginning of all this talk and initiative from FDOT? Was it because someone said we want to beautify this? I know that when Westchester was being built, the traffic needed to go from west to east, and this three-lane took place on SW 8th Street because I've lived in the area all my life. It was a two-way street and there were 20 cars. It was a Jewish neighborhood from 17th to 12th and there was no one there.

Vilma Croft: If we select the two-lane, two-way option, you don't have to do an in-depth traffic analysis. You have three lanes now. If you put two ways on both SW 7th and SW 8th streets, you're losing a lane. The main concern is that you have parking now, so that lane does not function as an efficient lane. You have people in one lane looking for parking space and people are coming out of parking spaces. That in itself is a safety issue. To add to that, you have buses. If you have a lane in each direction and you have a bus that stops, you're not going anywhere. You don't have to be a traffic engineer to come to that conclusion.

Comment: As a business owner in the area, I understand what you're saying and they do too. But there were a lot of people in the last meeting that did not understand, and do not understand the impact that can be caused.

Vilma Croft: You saw what happened when we showed the multi-model level of service. We showed a table, and in the second meeting, they first had a concern because it was (classified) A, B, C, D, or F, because that's how that analysis is done. They asked why the F was not the pedestrians or the bicycles. They immediately had an issue with that. You don't really have to do an analysis to see that if you remove a lane, the traffic flow is going to get worse.

Comment: I agree with you, but a lot of people that come to these meetings do not see that. Here's the problem: if you don't show them what's going to happen when it's a two-lane versus a three-lane, then they are going to keep that opinion. A lot of people coming to these meetings are residents. They don't own businesses. They don't understand that when you have a two-lane road, you're going to have spillover traffic going into the resident area. That needs to be addressed. Also, and I realize that taxes are not your area, but it's a cause and effect. Someone in the last meeting got really offended when I said that residents don't pay the taxes but the businesses do. I know they pay, but the businesses subsidize a lot of taxes for the residents. We all have to understand, there could be an effect where property values go up, but guess what happens then? Taxes also go up. If you destroy the businesses in the area, and they are no longer subsidizing those taxes, the taxes go up for residents.

Vilma Croft: If maintenance of traffic is the main concern, guess which one is the best?

Comment: The three-lane alternative.

Vilma Croft: There you go. I tried to explain that when you go to two lanes and you make the sidewalk wider, you going to affect your drainage. You are going to need new pipes.

Comment: SW 8th street was never designed for parking, so there are no parking garages for commercial establishments. Where do people park? They park in the neighborhoods and on the street. The county or the state never developed a parking plan. If you take away one lane and the parking on the street, then you'll have to go into the neighborhoods and guess what's going to happen? They are going to put a sign that says "parking for residents only" like in South Miami, and then

people will stop going to the businesses because you will get a ticket one minute after you park.

Comment: That has to be a part of the analysis.

Vilma Croft: To answer your question, when we showed the level of service, some people that support the two-way, two-lane alternative said, "It's not all about the cars."

Comment: The concern I have is that I cannot come here and say that this is going to happen. That's only my concern, and I own a business. I need someone to show what is going to happen. This the effect of removing one lane; this is the effect if we remove parking; and this is the effect of widening the sidewalks. They need to see that. You are showing two, three and one, and SW 7th Street needs to change its configuration as well, because SW 7th Street is a three-lane roadway. There is no parking and it's a lot less safe on SW 7th Street than it is on SW 8th Street. SW 7th Street needs a buffer.

Vilma Croft: Where do you create the buffer? Do you take away a lane?

Comment: SW 8th Street is a commercial street; it's not residential. Some people actually do live on SW 8th Street but it's not primarily residential. SW 7th Street is primarily a residential street. You really cannot treat those two streets the same way. If you alleviate some of the concerns that some people have by showing that you can do something on SW 7th Street and keep SW 8th Street the way it is, that would satisfy some concerns. If you have a buffer on SW 7th Street, you make it safer. Safety is a concern, but putting that as the tantamount concern is a mistake. There has to be a balance. If you want to talk about safety, then remove all the cars and make it a pedestrian thoroughfare.

Comment: I agree. I retired from the police force two years ago. I was there when Peñalver started cultural Fridays with a group of us from the Kiwanis Club. The concern has always been the traffic. We used to have six policemen when I was on the board and safety was always the concern as a crime prevention specialist. We don't have zebra, we don't have slow-down lights, we don't have lights to cross the streets. There's never been an FDOT effort to make it a pedestrian friendly street. Then you cross to Brickell and you see lighted crossings and you have all of that happening there. Here, you have a lot of issues that are safety, but they have never been addressed. You see a bicycle on the sidewalk and you can't enforce it. The three-way needs to stay, but you need to make it safe for pedestrians and safe for bicycles.

Vilma Croft: There are two projects that will go into construction this summer. They are both pedestrian safety projects. There's a project on SW 8th Street that's adding mid-walk crossings and it's removing some of the parking to reduce the total area where someone has to cross.

Comment: The residents cross anywhere. It's a mess, and it has not been enforced.

Comment: There's a lot of jaywalking.

Comment: It's not going to become a renaissance area, and guess what? We are the second largest tourist area in Miami.

Comment: You have to take a look at that because no one wants to go to South Beach and pay \$20 for a mojito. I want to eat an \$8 ropa vieja and not a \$30 ropa vieja.

Comment: Here is another concern for small businesses. It's becoming more and more difficult, as the years go by with online (purchasing), to make it as a small business owner. To interrupt business in a way that it would affect sales would be catastrophic to a lot of businesses in the area that have been around for decades. Our business has been around for two generations, and every year it becomes more difficult to make money and turn a profit because there is a lot of competition. If you remove the ability for people to come into our store and have access, and make it an attractive part of the area, businesses like ours will go away. We have an online store as well, but we prefer people coming in because that's the only way we can maintain the business in the area. If not, we just open up a warehouse and sell stuff from there. People don't realize that there are new businesses opening up on SW 8th Street, like Velvet Crème Doughnuts, and if this happens where there's a lot of obstruction to traffic, it won't last very long.

Vilma Croft: Do you understand what I'm saying? First, you have to select an alternative and once you see what the alternative is, depending on what the scope is, you can move on from there.

Comment: Again, my concern is this: the people that want a two-way don't have businesses in the area. They need to see the analysis of the impacts.

Vilma Croft: The first thing they said is that they don't care about traffic. They say, and you heard it today, is that the FDOT only looks at cars. They don't even like the FDOT project for pedestrian safety.

Comment: I agree with his comment. I think that the alternative for SW 8th Street is a three-way, with variations like zebra crossing, lights, etc. If you go and start with that two-lane construction, the ones that are going to suffer are the businesses and, ultimately, everyone will lose. During the 80s, it was drug infested, and no one wanted to come to Calle Ocho. Then came Viernes Cultural and a lot of people that had faith decided to stay. But the mom and pops could be gone if we are not careful.

Comment: I think that everyone is nervous because everybody sees Flagler Street. I'm not a millionaire; I'm just a guy that goes to work every day and makes a little bit of money and goes home to his family. That's the point. I don't want to see myself like Flagler Street when the area is now starting to grow again.

Vilma Croft: So you support the three-lane alternative?

Comment: Everybody here, I think, supports a three-lane alternative. It is not us that you need to convince.

Vilma Croft: I realize that.

Comment: I think the studies will help, because I think a lot of people will see that this traffic will spill over into residential areas.

Comment: Right – they will see how kids are going to get run over if this happens.

Vilma Croft: We have options. We have developed options. Let me show you. This is the two-lane, two-way alternative. One of the PAG members wanted this alternative even before the study began, mainly because it's not about traffic. That's how it was originally in the 1950s.

Question: There's no parking there, right?

Vilma Croft: There is parking. This one is the two-lane, one-way alternative. There's definitely an improvement over the other one, but it still has problems with safety because of the congestion. The more congestion you have, the more side-swipes and rear-end collisions you have.

Comment: In the meeting before the last one, everyone said, "We want three lanes, we want parking and all". Then, in the last meeting, they said, "No, we want a two-way alternative."

Comment: I was told that I had no voice. We need to have more people at these meets who are from the area and will be impacted directly.

Vilma Croft: The way the process goes is, that we continue with the analysis. Then, at the Alternatives Public Workshop we're planning to have in June, everyone within 300 feet on either side of the corridor gets invited.

Question: How do you reach them?

Vilma Croft: Through the mail, by hard copy.

Question: Who determines which alternative is selected? The committee or one person?

Comment: We make a recommendation to the FDOT and the FDOT makes the decision. If I put up the screen with all the alternatives and there is no consensus, then the "No-Build" Alternative is

viable until the end of the study. If the majority says we want two lanes, we would have to look at it.

Comment: There was someone who wrote an article in the newspaper a couple of years ago about the two-lane, one-way alternative.

Vilma Croft: Yes, he's the one who was talking about the exceptions and variations. He wanted the two-way, two-lane to be the alternative even before we started this project.

Comment: The two-way, two-lane option did not work back in the 1970s with less cars, and there was nothing in Brickell then.

Comment: You might not convince someone whose mind is set already on a certain option. You need to show the study and convince other people what would happen. It may be more aesthetically beautiful to have two lanes, but it's not the preferred alternative for businesses for traffic, for safety and so on.

Comment: The thing is, should we have a moratorium on building because the city keeps giving people permits to keep building? It just adds to the traffic.

Comment: Exactly, build less or build more in a longer timeframe, which is more appropriate than tearing up 1st Street and Flagler Street, and then going on to SW 8th Street, which makes no sense.

Comment: I think people need to get adjusted to Flagler Street.

Vilma Croft: Well, that's it. I can give you the slides in hard copy if you'd like. Thank you.

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.



State Road (SR) 90/SW 8 Street/SW 7 Street PD&E Study from SR 5/US 1/Brickell Avenue to SR 9/SW 27 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



PAG MEETING - Thursday, March 23, 2017 - SIGN-IN SHEET / HOJA DE FIRMAS

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