

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: May 26, 2020

TITLE: AN ALTERNATE HARMONIZATION APPROACH FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE 900 BLOCK OF WEST AVENUE PROFFERED BY THE ABUTTING PROPERTY OWNER

HISTORY:

On March 22, 2017, the Mayor and City Commission passed Resolutions No. 2017-29800 and Resolution No. 2017-29799, awarding design/build services to Ric-Man Construction Florida, Inc. ("Ric-Man") for West Avenue north of 14th Street improvements and West Avenue south of 14th Street Phase II improvements. The project is currently in design phase and the City is seeking input from stakeholders regarding harmonization between the West Avenue right-of-way improvements and the abutting private property.

The design of the project includes the recommendations of the Columbia University Resilience Accelerator that provided a modal hierarchy, which gave preference to pedestrians along the corridor. The design is aligned with this modal hierarchy by using a landscape buffer to provide additional separation of pedestrians from vehicular travel.

The private property owners along this corridor of West Avenue have been in contact with City staff regarding the proposed West Avenue improvements and harmonization since May of 2017. There have been monthly email exchanges and multiple in-person meetings over the past three years; specifically, two in 2017, one in 2018, two in 2019, and two virtual meetings in 2020. Since opening the dialog, the private property owners have been presented with various iterations of a harmonization plan by the City.

ANALYSIS:

Ric-Man has proposed a harmonization plan for the west side of West Avenue along the 900 block that the private property owners support. See Exhibit A, 900-910 West Avenue Harmonization Plan. The private property owners on the east side have proposed to the City an alternate harmonization plan for in front of the east side property (the "Alternative Harmonization Plan"). See Exhibit B, Proposed Harmonization Plans.

This deviation is being considered as it preserves the existing royal palms within the right of way. The private property owners are proposing the Alternative Harmonization Plan for the east side of West Avenue along this corridor, which will mirror the plan proposed for the west side of West Avenue by providing a sidewalk immediately abutting West Avenue. The Alternative Harmonization Plan inverts the location of the sidewalk and landscaping, thereby eliminating the landscape buffer for pedestrians.

This Alternative Harmonization Plan is being proposed and considered for several reasons, including:

- The Alternative Harmonization Plan will allow for consistency with West Avenue harmonization along this corridor of the 900 block, as both sides of the street will have a mirrored harmonization dynamic.
- The Alternative Harmonization Plan is similar to and consistent with other sections of the roadway that have already been raised, including those portions of West Avenue along the 500, 600, and 700 blocks.
- The private property owners along this corridor have agreed to fund and construct the Alternative Harmonization Plan improvements abutting the property on the east side of the sidewalk right-of-way along West Avenue to the east property line.
- The private property owners have indicated that the West Avenue Neighborhood Association has been included in the Alternate Harmonization Plan and is reportedly supportive of said plan.

CONCLUSION:

When possible, as part of the harmonization process, staff engages private property owners to align the design plans with the needs of each property. Since the Alternate Harmonization Plan directly affects a single property consisting of the entire 900 block of West Avenue, the property owners have agreed to pay for the construction, and the property owners have garnered community support for the alternate plan, the Administration recommends accepting the proposal of the abutting property owners along the east side of the 900 block of West Avenue, subject to the appropriate covenant or agreement for construction and future maintenance responsibilities.