



## Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee

### Committee Members

Clare McCord, Chair  
Curt Dyer, Vice Chair  
Galen Treuer  
Alon Alexander  
Ronald Starkman  
Karin Matos

City Liaison  
Amy Knowles

**TO: Members of the Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee**

**DATE: May 29, 2024**

**SUBJECT: Minutes of the Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee on May 29, 2024 Hybrid Meeting**

**Present:** Curt Dyer, Clare McCord, Ronald Starkman, Alon Alexander, Galen Treuer, Karin Matos

**Absent:**

**City Staff:** Amy Knowles (Liaison), Lauren Firtel, David Gomez, Joe Gomez, Cristina Ortega, Kevin Pulido, Mina Samadi, Noel Webber

**Commission:** Commissioner Alex Fernandez, Commission Aide to Lauren Dominguez – Aron Soriano

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### **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

Welcome by Clare McCord, Chair.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

R Starkman motion to approve minutes from the April 17, 2024 meeting. Motion seconded. Minutes approved.

#### **DISCUSSION ON ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMISSIONERS**

A Knowles shares details about her discussion with the City Attorney's office on engagement with Commissioners during committee meetings. Per the City Attorney's office, commissioners may observe the committee; however, they should not influence the opinions of independent advisory committees. Commissioner Fernandez volunteers to stay in the meeting to observe.

#### **FIRST STREET PROJECT UPDATE, NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH PLANS, AND NEXT STEPS**

- Joe Gomez, Public Works Director; Cristina Ortega, City Engineer; Kevin Pulido, Neighborhood Affairs Director

C McCord invites Joe Gomez to discuss the First Street Project. J Gomez discusses the project progress (60% design completed) and the grant monies received from the Resilient Florida grant program totaling \$35 Million. J Gomez explains the project phasing and segmenting of the project.

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- Phase 1: Installation of a pump station south of 1<sup>st</sup> Street on Washington Ave
- Phase 2: First Street Improvements
- Phase 3: Alton Road Improvements
- Phase 4: Washington Ave Improvements

J Gomez notes this project will service stormwater needs for the South Point neighborhood. The cost estimate for this project was very close to what Jacobs Engineering had forecasted, totaling about \$172 million. The City has \$81.4 Million in funding, so far. The short fall is \$89.5 Million. Grants office applied for \$63.2 Million from the Federal Highway PROTECT grant with award decision being released Summer 2024. Public works proposes to go forward with Phase I and Phase II. Community members expressed concerns about parking losses. Previous designs resulted in a 40% loss in parking, so Public Works asked to reduce the loss to under 10%. The consultant provided a concept of diagonal parking on the street to reduce the lost parking. In May, the Commission requested that the project be referred to the Land Use Committee due to public concern about the oak trees and the diagonal parking. Public Works committed to salvaging the oak trees by removing them and replanting them to the area after the construction.

C McCord asks if the median will be removed during the construction. J Gomez explains that it would be removed to elevate the level of the road and allow for harmonization. C McCord asks what the loss in parking would be for parallel parking. J Gomez explains the net loss in parking is about 40%.

C McCord asks about financing for the project. J Gomez explains that if the PROTECT grant is awarded, Phases 1 and 2 would be completely financed and that projects would likely break ground in 2026.

R Starkman asks about whether the pipes can go under Commerce Street. J Gomez explains that the pipe needs to be 96" in diameter, which cannot be installed in Commerce St due to a wastewater main, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is too narrow to conduct this project and harmonize. R Starkman asks if the parking lot can be used for the stormwater main. Joe's Stone Crab owns the lot and will not allow that. Public Works is also working with businesses for valet plans during construction.

C McCord comments about the duration of the initial planning for this project dating back to 2015. C McCord asks can we create an FAQ or a slick sheet to give high points? L Firtel says we can do an FAQ document and J Gomez agrees that updating an FAQ would be pertinent.

C McCord brings up the idea of using text messages to notify people that updates have been provided and they should navigate to a site to receive additional information. K Pulido notes the emergency messaging system cannot be used but the City is planning to use a new provider for community communications that has text messaging capabilities. C Dyer asks if updates can be provided with utility bills. L Firtel notes blurbs can be included on utility bills, but not lengthy messages. C Dyer asks if Nextdoor and Neighbors can be used to send notifications. K Pulido says Public Safety is on Neighbors and Eyes on Water, which can provide pop-up messages.

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A Alexander asks about the checkpoint that was in action on Saturday and if that was communicated. K Pulido discusses that text messages were sent through the emergency text service and with the newsletter. A Alexander asks if Waze and Google Maps are notified of these traffic affecting events. K Pulido explains that the Transportation Department does share data and information with Waze.

C McCord asks whether condo residents are being reached or if it's just the property managers/HOAs. K Pulido explains additional functionality coming to allow people to more easily forward messages and to enroll in mailing lists from forwarded messages. L Firtel says that she receives emails from board members and HOAs indicating that they have done individual reach outs to their residents.

C McCord asks if there are any visual indicators on the website that could be added. L Firtel notes that every project having a flicker would serve an adverse effect. R Starkman notes that the number of people using the project website may be low and wants to focus more on direct communication to the residents in affected areas to direct their attention to the projects that are local to them. C McCord notes that people feel underrepresented on these projects and are not included in the design and decision-making process.

C McCord identifies specific characteristics to focus on: the timing, the funding and phasing, the parking, and the reasons why the pipes need to be placed on First Street. L Firtel notes that staff presents ideal/proposed timelines and the difference in how that emerges in actual project timelines.

C McCord also discusses the project benchmarks and their lack of clarity. Noting that the 60% design completion benchmark does not provide much information to residents.

G Treuer notes there are many who do not have cars and who are not as represented in the planning processes. Some non-drivers have exhaustion in engaging in these processes. C McCord asks if there are better ways to engage cyclists and those who are unable to attend meetings at the regular times. G Treuer explains that with fewer wins and hostility and toward the car-less groups, they have engaged less. C McCord suggests engaging with advocacy groups.

Commissioner Fernandez states learnings from this committee can be used to discuss the issue during the Land Use Committee. Showing a visual of the underground infrastructure should be considered. C McCord discusses the benefits of holistic presentation of information for projects. Commissioner Fernandez says the consequences of not doing a project should be prioritized in communications. G Treuer and J Gomez note the consequence of affecting the excellent credit rating of Miami Beach. J Gomez discusses the importance of demonstrating resilience actions in the City's annual bond rating meetings. A Knowles explains a 2020 hedonic modeling project showing the positive impact of infrastructure resilience projects on local property values.

J Gomez emphasizes the criticality of the First Street project to the City. The Special Land Use Committee will meet on June 18, 2024.

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**Summary of recommendations:**

- Update the FAQ or “slick sheet” to communicate the timeline, decisions, and constraints of the project. Distribute physically and digitally.
  - o Include explanations of why the main cannot go down 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Commerce Street, or the Joe’s Stone Crab parking lot.
  - o Include description of the funding and project phases.
- Include visuals on stormwater, electrical, and wastewater infrastructure that constrains the project.
- Provide information on the history of project design decisions and on the costs of not doing the project, including the potential impact on the City’s credit rating.
- Investigate the use of text messaging and pop-ups or notifications on mobile apps and cell phones.
  - o Explore the use of Eyes on Water to send pop-ups about local projects.

**INDIAN CREEK/ FORMER PROJECTS COMMUNICATIONS**

M Samadi introduces the process of engaging the community about a project including: Creating a database of neighboring buildings with contact info, conducting the Pre-Construction Meeting, and conducting ongoing communication and coordination with the community. The team provides Bi-Weekly project updates, project advisories for any changes, emails to affected stakeholders, door hangers with information, and attends HOA and community meetings.

M Samadi notes each neighbor receives a harmonization agreement and to sign this document, they must be provided with the project designs. M Samadi then introduces the Project Issue List, which tracks community complaints and issues that have occurred on or near their properties. D Gomez states harmonization agreements require multiple meetings with each property owner, and their feedback is incorporated and iterated upon.

C McCord asks what improvements have been made in the past few years with the harmonization projects. M Samadi discusses that all harmonization issues must be resolved prior to project construction. Also says that FAQs are provided directly to adjacent community members and the website now has more information about each project. They also increased the frequency at which they would provide updates. Encourage everyone to let neighbors know about the project updates.

C McCord likes the door hanger and asks if that can be provided to individual units in condos. L Firtel says that is not allowed but that they do drop off flyers and hangers for the condos to distribute themselves. M Samadi notes that they also provide these to the condominiums, and they leave cards with contact information for the units. L Firtel discusses that door to door notices are conducted for any disruptions in service and for harmonization.

C McCord asks about the biggest challenges faced. M Samadi says one of the challenge points is communication fatigue from community members. D Gomez says biggest challenge is unexpected delays due to previously uncommunicated community concerns.



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G Treuer asks if the City includes innovative technology companies and local organizations in projects to market their ambitious nature. D Gomez says that CIP has worked with Nature Conservancy on living shoreline for the Brittany Bay Park project to help spread the word. A Knowles notes that these partnerships and innovative solutions can be incorporated from the start of procurement. D Gomez notes that the resilience components of projects are prioritized and communicated most.

C McCord thanks D Gomez and M Samadi for coming to the meeting. D Gomez thanks the Committee for its discussion and insight.

### **STAFF UPDATES**

- Meeting concluded with no time left

### **CURRENT/FUTURE PROJECT UPDATES**

- John Stewart (FIU) will present about a resilient architecture studio class at FIU.
- Debbie Tackett will discuss unsafe structures.
- Public Information Officers will be discussed in July.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- No public attended

### **ADJOURNMENT**

C McCord makes a motion to adjourn and C Dyer seconds.