

**CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP  
IJR/IMR & Landscaping**

City Hall Training Room  
May 24, 2011            5:30 p.m.

**I. Call to Order**

Mayor Ed Kelley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present were Mayor Ed Kelley, Commissioners James Stowers, Troy Kent, Rick Boehm, and Bill Partington, City Manager Joyce Shanahan, Assistant City Manager Ted MacLeod, City Attorney Randy Hayes, Planning Director Ric Goss, Leisure Services Director Robert Carolin, and Landscape Architect Paul MacDonald.

Also present were Greg Kern and Dan Kristoff of Reynolds, Smith & Hills.

**II. IJR/IMR**

Ms. Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, stated that Mr. Ric Goss, Planning Director, would update them on the status of the IJR/IMR report. She stated that staff would need a consensus about which option they wished to pursue.

Mr. Ric Goss, Planning Director, stated the contract was awarded to Reynolds, Smith & Hills (RS&H) in 2007 and was supposed to be finished in 18 months, but after about seven or eight months they realized that the land use assumptions would need to be revised, which delayed completion by another nine months. He stated that by August 2010 there was a draft, which staff had been reviewing with RS&H. He stated the final draft was before them which laid out the existing alternatives along the interchange at US1 and I-95. He stated that Mr. Greg Kern and Mr. Dan Kristoff of Reynolds, Smith & Hills were here tonight to explain the options, consequences of each, and how to proceed.

Mr. Greg Kern stated their contract was to produce an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) or an Interchange Modification Report (IMR). He stated this was a very highly prescribed process that had to be conformed to. He stated it involved conforming to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regulations and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations. He stated that after meeting several times with representatives from FDOT and the FHWA, they developed a methodology statement that laid out exactly what needed to be done as part of the study. He stated that

part of the analysis was to look at future land uses out to 2036 and develop traffic improvement alternatives that would accommodate 2036 traffic.

Mr. Kern stated they developed three alternatives:

1. No build – whereby the US1 and I-95 interchange ramp lanes and interchange ramp termini at US1 retained the existing configuration, including two directional lanes on US1 and a single left turn lane at the southbound and northbound ramp termini intersections. The consequence of doing nothing within the life of the 20-year Development Agreement with Ormond Crossings was that the southbound I-95 ramp at the US1 ramp terminus and the mainline would fail; and by design year 2036, the interchange would fail without improvements.
2. Alternative 1 Build – featured an expansion of US1 and improvements to the existing ramp intersections, but no new interchange with Ormond Crossings Boulevard and no collector-distributor roadway (CD) system. The consequence of this alternative was the cost of construction was projected to be much less than the business damages resulting from the increased rights-of-way needed for the expansion of US1 to nine lanes plus turn lanes and construction of a southbound slip lane. The results produced a better operation than the no-build alternative; however, the US1 ramp merge and diverge lanes along the mainline of I-95 fail.
3. Alternative 2 Build – was based on adding an interchange with Ormond Crossings Boulevard, a four-lane, divided roadway that would be the primary arterial within the development of Ormond Crossings. Due to the close proximity of the proposed diamond interchange to the existing US1 interchange, the two interchanges would be linked via a CD system of roadways flanking the interchange, whereby the number of entrance/exit points of the interstate would remain unchanged. This alternative would meet the future projected traffic demand and improve the operation of the US1 interchange relative to the No Build and Alternative 1 Build scenarios. Alternative 2 would distribute the regional traffic to two different locations without adding any new access points to the interstate system, which would be substantially less disruptive to traffic operations as the CD system and additional ramps could be constructed without the need to shift traffic on I-95 through the construction zone. It would not require the reconstruction of the existing bridges over I-95 and would allow for easier widening of I-95 in the future; and it would provide a level of redundancy that would protect operations should there be a severe accident along US1. Also, intersections at US1 would operate more smoothly due to the elimination of triple left and right turns.

Mr. Kern stated that there would be fewer LOS failures out to 2036 with Alternative 2 than Alternative 1 and No Build.

Mr. Kristoff stated that because of an economic shortfall in roadway construction, the FHWA had tightened up the rules and regulations, and enforcement of those rules and regulations with respect to allowing projects to move forward where a dedicated funding source was not available. He stated they recognized this in mid 2008 and brought it to the city's attention, whereby it was decided to re-approach the FDOT's District Interchange Review Committee, who exercised control over new interchanges with respect to their criteria and methodology before it went to the FHWA. He stated a new regulation required us to have some kind of funding mechanism in place; otherwise FHWA would not review the IJR/IMR without a statement of funding (i.e. our game plan for funding the project over the next three to five years).

Mr. Kristoff stated they recognized that the funding was not going to come to pass, so they approached FDOT, who advised that FDOT would not present the project to FHWA without a funding source, because FHWA would not review it. He stated this would have created a negative aspect with respect to any future potential IJR of any kind. He stated FDOT suggested completing a concept report producing a document that forecasted the traffic, identified deficiencies, and identified options to improve those deficiencies. He stated this document would be on record should future funding become available for any subsequent phase of the project to move forward.

Mr. Kristoff stated they prepared a concept report that FDOT and FHWA would accept as an interim document that was not asking them to make a decision at this time. He stated the concept report did not contain a recommendation at this time.

In conclusion, Mr. Goss stated that staff would need direction as to how the Commission wished to proceed regarding the options of recommending to FDOT that the rights-of-way be purchased, reserving the rights-of-way during the PMUD process, or doing nothing.

Commissioner Boehm noted that the total cost of the project was \$40 million with the purchase price of the rights-of-way at \$13 million by FDOT and he asked where the remaining funding came from; whereby, Mr. Kristoff stated that the \$13 million was for property that would be secured by the Ormond Crossings development. He stated there would still be rights-of-way under Alternative 1 and 2 along US1 for the businesses that would be impacted, but the cost would likely be more than \$40 million to complete any one of the alternatives. He stated the city could be setting aside funding as it was available and seeking federal and state participation.

Mayor Kelley stated that current and future funding sources were questionable, and he suggested focusing on what would make Ormond Crossings successful.

Ms. Shanahan stated that FHWA would not accept an option without funding; whereby, Mr. Kerns stated that FHWA accepted the concept report but the project would not move forward without funding.

Mr. Kristoff stated that there would be interim solutions but they would eventually degrade if the anticipated build out happened.

Commissioner Partington asked about the smartest way to move forward with this project and what was the best job he could do for the citizens of Ormond Beach to produce a quality product that would succeed. He stated he and Commissioner Kent were in Washington, D.C., eight years ago lobbying hard for this project and had gotten the money to perform the IJR/IMR study. He stated he felt like we needed to continue to move forward with this project as best we can to produce the best product for our city and Ormond Crossings. He stated he favored option one and putting our lobbyist to work on it, as well as city staff.

Commissioner Stowers questioned the impact of recent changes to the growth management act. He stated that Mr. Kerns and Mr. Kristoff had mentioned failures and level of service related to traffic concurrency, which he considered to be a non issue at this time. He stated they were anticipating spending a lot of money for this project by 2036, but he was not sure where we would be even ten years from now.

Mr. Kerns stated that the growth management act now made concurrency a local issue which did not necessarily go completely away and it had to be considered overall.

Mayor Kelley stated his understanding of the interpretation of recent legislation was a belief that those in Volusia County voted regarding the charter home rule to comply with the concurrency. He stated that he thought the state's intention was for those types of concurrency issues to become local issues.

Mr. Goss stated that each municipality had levels of service based on what we wanted to do and the County could not override it. He stated the County set levels of service on their roads because that was their jurisdiction.

Commissioner Boehm suggested FDOT would ignore any letter we sent them requesting funding for this project.

Mr. Goss stated that if the right-of-way purchase was not an option, then the no build was the only option. He stated the study would go to FDOT and then we would do nothing. He stated that Ormond Crossings could proceed and we would make sure their bridge was built based on the recommendations of the study. He stated the issue was the success of the project based upon the transportation changes.

Ms. Shanahan stated she felt that development of Ormond Crossings was crucial to the economic development health and vitality of Ormond Beach. She stated that now was the time to set aside the rights-of-way before there was any building in that area, but it was a difficult situation because Tomoka Holdings did not want the right-of-way reserved because of the uncertainty as to when FDOT would purchase it since no state funding was available.

Mayor Kelley stated he would like to hear some clarification from Tomoka Holdings; whereby, Mr. Clint Smith of Tomoka Holdings stated that they had been working on Phase A (northern third of the east side) and Phase B (northern third of the west side) for the past two years which they would be stopping because of the uncertainty of the collector-distributor system. He stated they would be out of business if they waited a year or two years for FDOT to make a decision on buying the rights-of-way.

Ms. Judy Pizzo stated she was representing Noreen Downs of FDOT and here tonight to listen and could not comment on the project.

Mr. Bill Livingson of Ormond Crossings stated that two traffic engineers had studied this project and laid out a mitigation plan and development agreement that basically said there was not a problem and that a CD system was not needed at this time. He stated the project was scaled down considerably in their model.

Mr. Dan Antonio of Lassiter Transportation Group stated they did an analysis of Ormond Crossings through 2025 which included a regional project. He stated they developed a mitigation plan that involved transportation management strategies, certain transit components, etc. He stated the developer still had the commitment to improve land uses at the I-95 interchange.

Mr. Sans Lassiter, Lassiter Transportation Group, stated they used historical rates that were based on the growth rate of 2006. He stated they were required to go beyond just a highway model as part of the mobility side. He stated they recognized that there was much more to this project than just highway improvements. He stated they felt it would operate through 2025.

Commissioner Boehm questioned if a letter sitting on FDOT's desk for months would hurt the project.

Mayor Kelley stated he felt the city had a great relationship with FDOT and it was not FDOT holding up the project.

Ms. Shanahan stated that the City Commission recommended staff send a letter asking FDOT to seriously consider entering negotiations with Tomoka Holdings to purchase rights-of-way in advance of a PD&E study. She stated if FDOT did not engage Tomoka Holdings with purchasing the rights-of-way, then doing nothing was the only option, and staff would not delay Tomoka Holdings from getting the PMUD and plats processed and approved.

Mr. Randy Hayes, City Attorney, suggested approving a resolution that would endorse one of the options in order to formalize their decision.

### **III. Landscaping**

Ms. Shanahan stated that Mr. Paul MacDonald, Landscape Architect, had prepared the following PowerPoint presentation in order to gain some consensus on the Commission's desire for the landscape medians.

Mr. Paul MacDonald stated there were three distinctive median design styles:

- 1) Granada medians – with trees, shrubs and ground cover, St. Augustine grass and an automatic irrigation system, except for the first median west of Nova Road which was non-irrigated with Bahia grass;
- 2) Nova Road medians and US1 medians – with trees (ornamental palms and flowering trees), St. Augustine grass and an automatic irrigation system (Nova Road utilized reuse water and US1 utilized both reuse and potable water); and
- 3) North US1 medians (north of Melrose Avenue) – with flowering trees, Bahia grass, and was non-irrigated.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the current irrigation source for the Granada medians (Nova Road to I-95) was potable water. He stated there were the options of converting to irrigation wells at a cost of \$233,000 for five wells or extending the reuse system from Nova Road to I-95 at a cost of approximately \$950,000.

Mr. MacDonald stated that currently there were 250,000 square feet of St. Augustine grass from Nova Road to I-95. He stated alternate options for ground cover were to replace the existing St. Augustine grass with Bahia sod at a cost of \$82,500, to replace the existing St. Augustine grass with

Perennial Peanut sod at a cost of \$635,000, or to replace existing St. Augustine with Asiatic Jasmine plantings at a cost of \$587,500.

Ms. Shanahan stated that this was for planting costs and did not take into account any savings from water usage and decreased mowing, etc.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the above cost included spraying, mulching, preparation, etc. He stated the contract options would be 1) to re-bid the landscape maintenance contract using current specifications already in place; or 2) to extend the Servello contract and revise specifications for a spring 2012 re-bid.

Mayor Kelley stated he felt it was staff's responsibility to perform the design and options, but the Commission may wish to discuss concepts and ideas. He stated that crepe myrtles needed to be trimmed or else they grew very tall and interfered with power lines. He stated he had driven Granada several times and the recent efforts had improved the looks of the medians very much.

Commissioner Kent noted that 8.472 million gallons of drinking water was used to irrigate the medians annually. He distributed a news article from the *Orlando Sentinel*, entitled, "Water-gulping grass is ruining Florida," which he felt was appropriate for tonight's discussion. He stated that St. Augustine grass required billions of gallons of water and massive quantities of herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers. He stated the chemical atrazine used in weed-and-feed fertilizer had been found in drinking water all over the country, which is poisonous to wildlife and was linked to birth defects, low birth weight, etc.

Commissioner Kent noted that the staff report stated, "*After extensive review, staff has determined that there is a direct disconnect between how the approved median landscape plans were initially designed, permitted, and required to be maintained, and the detailed requirements of the specifications to enforce the same within the existing landscaping maintenance contract. Therefore, staff is recommending we extend the landscape maintenance contract for next fiscal year to enable staff to review and rewrite the specifications to provide more detailed requirements for a new contract to be procured for fiscal year 2012-2013*". He suggested changing the spray heads to MP rotators, which would be a 25-30% savings of water. He stated he felt they could be better stewards of this precious resource. He questioned why it would take a year to rewrite the landscaping specifications. He stated he favored six months plus the remainder of the contract.

Commissioner Kent stated he called some people in the landscaping business for an estimate, who provided an estimate of \$320,100 using four-inch plant containers (a difference of \$260,000 from the staff report); and if you used one-gallon containers, the savings would be \$107,000. He stated this would reduce mowing, turf fertilization and pest control, and water usage by maybe half.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the further apart the plantings were, the longer it would take to grow in and require more hand weeding. He stated that was why they used one-gallon material with 18-inch centers. He stated that four-inch material with one-inch centers would cost less than \$1 per plant, which he stated was impossible; whereby, Commissioner Kent stated it was possible for this company.

Commissioner Kent stated he was not okay with just doing nothing and not on board with removing everything either. He stated he was concerned when he saw large tracts of dead grass. He stated he wanted us to have a plan.

Commissioner Kent stated he was in favor of changing what was in place, making it less labor intensive and saving water. He commented that the one mowing the grass was the only one walking on it.

Commissioner Boehm expressed his concern that the numbers in the CIP were not accurate estimates, such as Commissioner Kent's estimate was from only one company and not a full estimate. He stated that an RFP had not been done, so they did not know at this time what the savings would be. He suggested looking into an eco-friendly grant which would replace the St. Augustine grass. He noted that the city spent almost \$100,000 a year mowing and watering the St. Augustine grass. He stated he did not favor staying with status quo or St. Augustine grass, as his goal was to eliminate the St. Augustine grass.

Mayor Kelley stated he favored looking for an alternative, such as a natural area without any fertilizer, water, or mulch. He suggested that after a year, they would be able to have a much better plan.

Commissioner Boehm suggested revisiting all landscaped areas for alternatives to the traditional plantings we now had.

Commissioner Stowers stated he was in Jacksonville Beach recently and noticed they had Medjool palms and ornamental grass in their medians. He stated he favored looking at this now to put a plan together to reduce water usage in the medians. He stated he had researched artificial grass as an alternative to watering or a drip line system. He suggested using a portion of

a median as a test area for trying various alternatives and waiting to hear what the citizens had to say about it.

Commissioner Stowers stated that he had viewed artificial turf on-line which had matting on the bottom so no weeds came through it. He stated the color and thickness resembled the look and feel of grass, the color did not fade over time, but it was expensive to install.

Mr. Robert Carolin, Leisure Services Director, stated that vehicles ran up on the medians frequently and would rip up the artificial turf and it would have to be replaced, which would be more difficult (and costly) than just replacing a few plants.

Commissioner Partington stated he favored changing the spray heads to save 25-30% of watering and using a remote moisture sensor. He stated he did not have enough information for converting to wells. He stated that most people he talked to like the way the median look. He suggested phasing in Asiatic jasmine as the St. Augustine grass died out and using test medians with the Asiatic jasmine.

Ms. Shanahan stated that Port Orange was testing perennial peanut on Dunlawton Boulevard near the Panera Bread restaurant.

Regarding the Servello contract, Commissioner Partington stated if we were going to have test areas, then we would need to extend the contract until we saw the results of the test medians.

Mayor Kelley stated that the total cost of installing wells and redoing the medians would be a 20-year pay back.

Commissioner Boehm suggested exploring the alternative and grant funding before re-bidding the contract. He stated that no one could bid on the project at this time.

Commissioner Kent stated he did not favor waiting a year before rebidding the landscape maintenance contract. He stated he favored extending the contract six months. He stated he favored changing the MP rotators or irrigation system to reduce the amount of water used annually and looking for grants.

Ms. Shanahan stated that she would like staff to go back to Servello and have a discussion regarding extending the contract, test areas, etc.

Mr. MacDonald commented that the new police station in Port Orange had planted Asiatic jasmine beds which he saw at their ribbon cutting in January 2011, but he was concerned with the amount of weeds currently in the beds.

Mr. Randy Hayes, City Attorney, stated there was a timeline to follow because the contract had an expiration date. He stated we could amend the contract if the Commission and contractor were agreeable.

The Commissioners asked about the amount of watering Asiatic jasmine required; whereby, Mr. MacDonald stated that it required less watering (maybe once per month) than St. Augustine grass. He stated that St. Augustine "floratam" sod was supposed to be much more drought tolerant than all other varieties.

Ms. Shanahan stated that staff could accomplish some alternative plantings, such as Asiatic jasmine and/or perennial peanut and/or synthetic turf and look at changing to MP rotators, but the contract would require an amendment at this time. The Commission was in consensus to extending the contract for one year, in order to allow staff enough time to review and rewrite the specifications for a re-bid of the contract.

Commissioner Kent noted the city had two irrigation people on staff and he would like to see about removing those positions if there was enough savings from an alternate planting and/or irrigation system.

Commissioner Kent reiterated he did not favor wasting so much water irrigating the medians; whereby, Mayor Kelley stated that much of the water evaporated and was not destroyed.

Mayor Kelley suggested that Servello might help us with the experimental areas at no increased cost at this time.

Commissioner Kent asked if the spray heads could be changed at this time in order to save 25% of the water usage; whereby, Mr. MacDonald stated that the watering time would have to be tripled to put down the same amount of water if we changed to an MP rotator system. He stated there was a particular window of time to irrigate depending on the traffic, wind, etc., and with 39 zones we would be watering for a week straight. He stated that it was not as easy as it sounds to make major changes to the systems in place.

Commissioner Kent asked about a drip line irrigation system; whereby, Mr. MacDonald stated for the Granada medians the challenge would be that drip irrigation would require 60,500 feet of hose, as each median would have miles of hose. He stated that he would have applied for a

beautification grant, but FDOT grants precluded planting ground covers and sod, and 50% of the material had to be large containers of five-gallons or greater.

Commissioner Partington asked what Leisure Services had to do with the landscape contract; whereby, Ms. Shanahan stated that in 2008 the Commission combined building and facilities maintenance under Leisure Services.

Commissioner Kent expressed his confusion of why the Leisure Services Director was in charge of the Landscape Architect.

Mr. MacDonald stated that he read all material available on the existing contract and he determined that the disconnection was that the contractor did something one way and in-house did something another way and the two did not meet.

#### **IV. Close the Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Transcribed by: Lois Towey