

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-74  
Consideration to Accept and Approve  
TOHB A1A Redesign Elements for Submittal to FDOT

TO: Town Manager Mac Serda  
Town Attorney D.J. Doody  
CC: Town Clerk Sherry Henderson  
FROM: Mayor Deb Tarrant  
RE: Agenda Back-up for the Above Resolution  
December 1, 2020 Commission Meeting

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As discussed at the November 10 Commission meeting, several elements of the FDOT 30% Complete design for the A1A project need to be addressed. As presented, certain parameters do not match those that were agreed to in conversations held during early stages of development for this project. This may be a result of the fact that both Town and FDOT personnel working on the project have changed since the project originated. Accordingly, it might be helpful for the Commission to know the early history of this project.

In February 2015, Greg Stewart, Executive Director of the MPO, came to Hillsboro Beach with a presentation for residents and for the Commission. Mr. Stewart's proposal was to resurface A1A in order to establish marked bike lanes. He wanted to narrow driving lanes and add 5' bike lanes on each side of the road. Mr. Stewart was overwhelmed by a Town Hall packed with angry residents spilling all the way out into the driveway. Residents were upset over the MPO proposal for several reasons:

- The Town only has a single road for egress onto and off of the island. The narrowness of the island creates an already overcrowded situation on A1A, with delivery trucks, mail trucks, construction vehicles, maintenance vehicles, etc. struggling for places to park every day.
- The average age for Hillsboro Beach residents is 66 years old. Very few of our residents are cyclists. The Town is basically a retirement community with elderly drivers needing adequate road width to navigate. Narrowing driving lanes provides a more hazardous situation for both drivers and cyclists.
- The MPO proposal did not address the need for flood control; it merely proposed reclaiming additional easement area and remarking the pavement.
- Residents did not want anything done to draw ever more cyclists through Hillsboro Beach.

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Bottom line – The MPO project provided no benefit for the residents of Hillsboro Beach, only serving to turn our Town into a bicycle thoroughfare by allocating 10' of our already crowded roadway to cyclists. Given the extreme amount of resistance to the project, MPO withdrew the proposal altogether.

In late 2015, based on multiple road closures for King Tides and the tremendous need for flood control, while serving as Vice Mayor, I reached out to FDOT to request relief. FDOT representatives agreed to start design work to raise the road on a temporary basis until a complete redo of A1A could be financed by the Department. Subsequently, FDOT made the decision to forego a temporary fix, and budgeted the project for a complete overhaul in their 2022 budget, with the understanding that bike lanes would be included. With input from key (vocal) residents, it was agreed that:

- Driving lane widths would be maintained.
- A 4' bike lane would be done as a compromise – 4' bike lanes are used extensively in other areas of the County.
- A sidewalk would be added in the north mile of Town where 70% of the Town's population resides.
- The road would be raised to address flooding (beyond a temporary fix).

The agreement was for actual “marked” 4' bike lanes. Residents who still wanted no bike lanes at all finally agreed that in order to get the flooding addressed, a 4' bike lane would be the compromise. Additional considerations were that drivers would be less frustrated if cyclists are expected to stay within a marked bike lane, and cyclists would be much safer with a marked 4' lane rather than a shoulder measuring 2' – 3'.

To reiterate, the objection to 5' bike lanes went beyond maintaining the width of driving lanes. The consensus shared by the Commission and residents back in February 2015 was “if you build it, they will come.” The last thing Hillsboro Beach residents wanted then (or now) is for our Town to become a cycling destination thoroughfare any more than it already is with the existing 2' – 3' shoulders. To use the words of one of our residents, “Having 5' bike paths in planned communities that are laid out ahead of time is great, but to cram 5' bike paths onto a dangerous, congested road 50 years after development is like forcing a round peg into a square hole.”

In addition to deviation from the agreed upon 4' bike lanes, the 30% Completion proposal presented November 10 by FDOT deviated from original discussions in terms of installing a sidewalk in the central mile of Town. With residents' input, the agreement had been to install a sidewalk only in the north end of Town for the following reasons:

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- Seventy percent of the Town’s population lives in the north mile.
- Properties in the center mile provide Hillsboro Beach with much of its panache due to the beautiful tree canopy. Maintaining the essence of Hillsboro Mile was deemed very important.
- Each segment of Town would be given a benefit – the north mile would have a sidewalk, the center mile would maintain the old Hillsboro Mile feel, and the south mile would have flood control.

In addition to concerns that specs for bike paths, driving lanes, and sidewalks be executed with the needs of Hillsboro Beach residents as a consideration, it’s concerning that the flood control piece of this project has yet to be specifically addressed. As presented at this year’s FSBPA conference, the State recently passed legislation **requiring** resiliency studies to be done for all State projects. Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Broward County’s chief resiliency officer, has studied resiliency in Broward County extensively. Her studies should be used in planning the new elevation for A1A. According to Dr. Jurado, by 2040 (just 19 years from now), it is expected that sea level will increase by 17” in Broward County. That is nearly one inch per year. Given that Hillsboro Mile already suffers road closures on a regular basis due to flooding with as much as nine or ten inches of standing water, it is of paramount importance that flood controls installed with this FDOT project be sufficient to last beyond just a few years. Flood control measures in Hillsboro Beach should be as aggressive as those used in Miami-Dade. It would seem MPO and FDOT would agree with this, since it does no good to create bike lanes if both the driving lanes and the bike lanes are under water.

It is for these reasons that this Resolution is on today’s agenda. In hindsight, had a Resolution been passed at the beginning of the project, we likely would not be having this discussion. Fortunately, during the presentation on November 10, the FDOT representative acknowledged that changes to the original design had been made, so hopefully reverting back to the original parameters will not present a problem.

One additional point should be mentioned, lest there be confusion down the road. Unequivocally, residents of Hillsboro Beach do NOT want the speed limit on Hillsboro Mile reduced from 35 mph. This was made very clear to Mr. Stewart initially, and has been subsequently raised with FDOT as well.