



City Council Chamber
735 Eighth Street South
Naples, Florida 34102

City Council Workshop Meeting October 4, 2004 at 8:30 a.m.

Mayor Barnett called the meeting to order and presided.

ROLL CALL ITEM 1

Present:

Bill Barnett, Mayor
Tamela Wiseman, Vice Mayor (8:35 a.m.)

Council Members:

William MacIlvaine
Johnny Nocera (8:32 a.m.)
Clark Russell
John Sorey, III
Penny Taylor

Also Present:

Robert Lee, City Manager
Victor Morales, Asst. to City Manager
Dan Mercer, Public Works Director
George Archibald, Public Works Eng. Manager
Pamela Koepke, Recording Specialist
Karen Kateley, Administrative Specialist

Jim MacArthur
Peter Van Arsdale
Jack Pointer
Reed Jarvi
Don Peterson, Fire Chief, Golden Gate
William H. Poteet, Jr.
Ron Talone

Collier County Transportation Staff:

Norman Feder, Administrator
Don Scott, Director
Gregg Strakaluse, Eng. & Const. Mgt. Director
Gary Petaansuu, Eng. & Const. Sr. Project Mgr.
Connie Deane, Community Liaison

Media:

John Henderson, Naples Daily News
Denes Hustey, News Press
Sean Brown, NBC2
Trey Radell, WINK TV

Arlene Guckenberger
Jim Boula
Henry Kennedy

Other interested citizens and visitors

SET AGENDA ITEM 2

No changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM 3

None.

PRESENTATION OF GOLDEN GATE OVERPASS STUDYITEM 4

Transportation Systems Planner Joel Leisch presented his report on the overpass at Airport-Pulling Road and Golden Gate Parkway (a copy of which is contained in the file for this meeting in the City Clerk's Office). Mr. Leisch explained that he had reviewed all available data pertaining to traffic counts, including transportation reports in the Naples area compiled over the past 15 years, specifically at the Golden Gate Parkway/Airport-Pulling Road intersection. He also noted that he had indicated the need for a future grade separation, or overpass, at that intersection although he had been unable to predict exactly when such a structure would be needed.

It was his recommendation, therefore, that an at-grade split intersection be implemented prior to the opening of the I-75/Golden Gate Parkway interchange. He also included in his recommendation that, prior to the aforementioned interchange opening, the planned improvements at Golden Gate Parkway and Goodlette-Frank Road be constructed. Construction of the aforementioned split intersection, prior to installation of an overpass, Mr. Leisch said, would reduce time lost by motorists and would allow traffic to be monitored over time. A split intersection differs from the single intersection, he said, because all of the traffic movements are accommodated within the two intersections. Movements would be coordinated by a single controller. He further pointed out that the design, containing two intersections with an overpass, would, nevertheless, cost from \$4 to \$10 million less than the design presently under construction. He displayed the simulation and animation for the various traffic designs of this proposed project.

In response to Council Member Russell, Mr. Leisch clarified that the anticipated savings are primarily associated with his proposed overpass design operating more efficiently, regardless of whether it is constructed now or in the future. He further remarked that, unlike the current sequencing plan, his two-intersection design would allow all existing lanes to operate while an overpass is being constructed. In response to Vice Mayor Wiseman, Mr. Leisch indicated that his plan would require additional right-of-way on the canal (east) side of Airport-Pulling Road, but that this land is already in the possession of the County. He also responded that he would be available to assist the County to help develop the concept and analyses that are needed.

In response to Council Member Taylor, Mr. Leisch stressed that an overpass will eventually be needed to deal with the lack of east/west thoroughfares from the north/south roadways. He further stated that an additional Gordon River crossing would not influence future traffic on Golden Gate Parkway. He also said that an overpass might be needed earlier or later than his forecasted year of 2025, but that a six lane overpass would possibly not be needed until the year 2050. The forecast for the year 2025 shows that the traffic on the overpass could grow by 30%, until a third lane in each direction is called for, at which time an interchange or overpass would also be needed at Golden Gate Parkway and Goodlette-Frank Road. Mr. Leisch also pointed out that his overpass design would be five feet lower than the one proposed.

Mr. Leisch confirmed, for Council Member MacIlvaine, that the symmetrical growth in the City and County, regarding traffic issues in the year 2025, must be addressed by the City or County Planning Departments.

Council Member Sorey said he believed the aforementioned \$4 to \$10 million could, in fact, be better utilized elsewhere, and concurred that there is an at-grade alternative, even though an overpass would be needed in the future. He said that most Council members who are opposed have made it clear that when the level of service requires an overpass, they would be so committed. If the level of service requires an overpass at this location, then it would require another overpass at Goodlette-Frank Road, he said. Mr. Sorey referred Mr. Leisch to a September 29 report, by Public Works Engineering Manager George Archibald, wherein Mr. Leisch indicated he was in agreement with the last five items in Mr. Archibald's report (Attachment 1).

Council Member Nocera asked Mr. Leisch whether safety and timing issues had been considered, and Mr. Leisch replied that the number of accidents would be the same with either two intersections or one intersection, although two intersections would be more efficient. Council Member Nocera pointed out that the growth impacts are occurring in the County since the City's population has remained relatively static for several years. Mr. Leisch responded that the quick fix design referred to in his report would be the first phase in ultimately constructing the overpass. He remarked that both the sequence of construction and the traffic control plan in the present construction are very similar to his first phase of construction; namely the split intersection constructed on the outside and the operation of two intersections. Mr. Leisch stated that based on the traffic forecast, which he, however, said is not necessarily accurate, an overpass would be needed.

Mr. Leisch further responded to Council Member Russell to the effect that the total number of lanes at the intersection approaches would be the same with or without the overpass, but arranged differently to accommodate the heavy volume of eastbound through movement in the evening.

In response to Council Member Taylor, Mr. Leisch said that delay in constructing an overpass would defer the expenditure by monitoring traffic to determine the need after split intersections are built. He distinguished his 2025 overpass as both narrower and five feet lower than the one designed by Collier County and said his design would minimize traffic delays during construction. He concurred that the land usage for both overpasses would, however, be the same although there is one fewer left turn lane in his design, which only requires two lanes compared to the present one being three left turning lanes. This would be on the east side of Airport-Pulling Road.

Mr. Leisch then displayed computer simulations showing the split intersections in animation based on the 2004 peak evening winter season traffic counts without an overpass; he also showed the I-75/Golden Gate Parkway interchange in 2005 as well as 2025, both with the overpass and the single and split intersection designs.

Public Comment (9:46 a.m.) Jim MacArthur, 204 Bear's Paw Trail, thanked Collier County Transportation Division Administrator Norman Feder and his associates for their concern and dedication to the overpass project. He commented on the benefits of building a split intersection now and building an overpass later as being smaller, substantially more efficient, and with expansion possibilities, thus saving \$4 to \$10 million. He also remarked about the risks of the

current design failing in 2025 or 2030 if the population growth does not increase by 25%. **Peter Van Arsdale, 123 11th Avenue South**, said that it was difficult to understand the enhanced efficiency of the proposed split intersection, and that the overpass should proceed according to the County's plan. A lawsuit, he predicted, would be both frivolous and a waste of taxpayer funds. In conclusion, Mr. Van Arsdale pointed out that no evidence had been presented regarding the issue of noise. **Jack Pointer, 105 Erie Drive**, expressed concern that delaying construction of an overpass would add 10% per year to the total, thus costing over \$100 million in twenty years. **Reed Jarvi, 1281 Venetian Way**, a transportation engineer, pointed out that in most cases dual left turn lanes are needed and questioned the advisability of prolonging construction of an overpass in light of significant future increases in construction costs. **Ron Talone, David Plummer & Associates, representing SWFTI (Southwest Florida Transportation Initiative)**, encouraged the City and County to move forward with the overpass so as to have it in place before the opening of the new I-75/Golden Gate Parkway interchange. He stressed that traffic projections are seldom over-estimated and, in fact, tend to be underestimated. In response to Member Russell, he said that SWFTI raised \$8 million in grant funds for the project. **William H. Poteet, Jr., 6180 Star Grass Lane**, President of the Golden Gate Area Civic Association, stated that this group had been consistently in favor of the overpass and believes it is the best method for long-term traffic needs. He stated that millions could be saved if the overpass is not delayed and urged Council to consider what is best for the entire community. **Don Peterson, Chief of the Golden Gate Fire Control & Rescue District**, endorsed the County's overpass proposal and asked Council to take into consideration the need for safe access through intersections, by emergency vehicles. Having a flyover at the Golden Gate Parkway and Airport-Pulling Road would also make it much safer for evacuation purposes, he said.

Collier County Transportation Division Administrator Norman Feder explained the process by which a traffic model is developed, through use of socioeconomic data and census figures to develop traffic analysis zones, which take into consideration both household and employment statistics. He said the City of Naples is the primary attraction for trips that will continue to grow, although alternative destinations are being developed in the eastern part of the County. He stated that, while the report is clear that an overpass is needed by 2025, the I-75/Golden Gate Parkway interchange will significantly increase traffic on Golden Gate Parkway, which, he said, had been underestimated.

Mr. Feder also commented that, in January 2003, he had presented to Council a study representing the findings of five different consultants and the County staff, all showing the need for an overpass. He, nevertheless, commended Mr. Leisch's report and said that he concurred with much of it and said he and Dr. Leisch would meet further.

Mr. Feder said he recognized that all members of the community did not support the overpass and this had not been taken lightly. He pointed out, however, that the project has been in the planning process since 1990, based on joint action by the City and the County to reserve the right-of-way so that Golden Gate Parkway could fly over Airport-Pulling Road. At that time, \$5 million had been invested in the reserved right-of-way, although there would be additional right-of-way costs for an expanded footprint and for canal relocation. He expressed concerns as to whether the center on Airport Road would fully clear to allow for smooth operation as shown on

the simulation. There would be a continuous construction cycle, with over five years of delays, and additional costs with the alternative plan, he further added. Mr. Feder also characterized it as unfortunate that there had been a divisive issue with misleading information and urged that the matter move forward.

In response to Council Member Sorey, regarding how to reduce the visual perception of the overpass height, Mr. Feder said the difference from the original plan is approximately 3.4 feet and not 5 feet as noted by Mr. Leisch. Mr. Feder also said that \$4.5 million had been allotted for hardscape and landscape, and that a gradual slope of the ramps would enhance the view and decrease traffic noise. He further explained that alternate access points were provided to the residents of the Bear's Paw subdivision.

In further discussion, Mr. Feder confirmed for Council Member Russell that it would not be necessary to return the aforementioned SWFTI grant, regardless of the decision on the overpass. Mr. Feder reiterated the position that an overpass is needed, regardless of the design. He also expressed concern about the additional 25 feet required in the alternative report, along the east side of Airport-Pulling Road, combined with permitting requirements for canal relocation and the resulting impacts to Naples Grande and Grey Oaks developments. He further questioned the advisability of phasing construction in such a heavily traveled location. When the Board of County Commissioners approved the construction, he said, they were aware that a split intersection design could possibly last until 2010, but that the ultimate need was an overpass phase.

Council Member MacIlvaine remarked that there would be little increase in construction traffic entering Naples, but that the County will have increased traffic, even though the County population growth will not occur in the City. Acknowledging the extent of growth in Collier and South Lee Counties, Mr. Feder said that the City is, nevertheless, the major core area for the County, even if destinations are established to the east. The overpass, he said, would clear the traffic out of the City in the afternoons, but would not reduce or induce it, he explained.

Mr. Feder further responded to Council Member Sorey that the overall program is funded by gas tax, impact fees and one-third by a bond repaid through increased ad valorem value. Regardless of the effect on population growth by such things as multiple hurricanes, Mr. Feder said that in his experience, growth has always been underestimated in the past.

In response to Council Member Nocera, Mr. Feder confirmed that City of Naples planners continue to be involved in long-range transportation planning as part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). He further stated that the aforementioned population estimates referred to full-time residents, but an annual increase in tourism is also anticipated.

Noting that, even with a split intersection, an overpass would be needed by 2010, Mr. Feder also expressed the opinion that an overpass would not be necessary at Golden Gate Parkway and Goodlette-Frank Road, comparing such areas with turning movements to those that have through movement in opposing directions. This, he said, is when grade separation becomes the issue.

Mr. Leisch stated for the record that he was an adjunct professor at Boise State University but was not tenured. He explained signal timing as the reason for poor operation of the I-75/Pine Ridge Road interchange. He clarified that the cycle length in the split intersection alternative is 90 seconds, projecting a 24 second average delay for a vehicle during the 2004 evening peak period. In all cases, Mr. Leisch said, the split intersection would operate more efficiently as long as there are through ramp-to-ramp movements. Without the need for the through movements, a smaller intersection could be created and operated, with three-phase control as efficiently as the split intersection design. He explained that with a smaller intersection, the length of the central span can be reduced and the height lowered by as much as a foot. Also eliminating what he termed Texas U-turns would reduce the length of the structure and the bridge by possibly 30%. He emphasized that he does not see the need for constructing a six lane overpass and said that if six lanes were needed, an interchange would be needed at Goodlette-Frank Road as well.

In response to Council Member Sorey, Mr. Leisch confirmed that the additional 25 feet of needed right-of-way may require moving the canal. In response to Council Member Taylor, Mr. Leisch explained that the split design would prolong the construction of the overpass by five years beyond 2005.

BRIEFING BY CITY MANAGER.....ITEM 5

City Manager Robert Lee referred to his previously submitted report (a copy of which is contained in the file for this meeting in the City Clerk's Office).

Council Member Taylor suggested that the October 21st meeting at River Park Community Center, regarding the 41-10/Heart of Naples roadway improvements, be held in the evening for improved attendance.

During review of items on the October 6th regular Council meeting agenda, Council Member Sorey requested separate discussion under Item 8-b for approval of certain special events, and suggested keeping the decision about the fees in abeyance until a decision is made on the special events policy. Council Member Taylor asked for clarification as to where the events would be held on October 23rd. She also requested clarification on Item 9, rezone petition for property at 201 Goodlette Road South, as to the height of five stories or the number of stories that could occur in 78 feet. Regarding Item 11-b, Lido Bay Marina site plan, Miss Taylor sought a commitment for a pathway along the Gordon River; secondly, she said she wanted to address the issue of dedicating boat slips to commercial rentals when new marinas are developed. Miss Taylor asked that Item 14, pertaining to hanging the Belair Court swing, be explored as to whether the property owners want to take possession of that property, therefore exempting the City from any liability.

Council Member Sorey asked that Items 8-b-5, 8-b-13, 8-b-22, 8-b-26 and 8-b-27 be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion.

CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURN
11:23 a.m.

Bill Barnett, Mayor

Tara A. Norman, City Clerk

Minutes prepared by:

Carol Frank, Recording Specialist

Minutes Approved: 11/3/04