

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**TO:** Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

**THROUGH:** Stan Boling, AICP; Community Development Director  
Rich Szyrka, PE; Public Works Director

**FROM:** Phil Matson, AICP; MPO Staff Director

**DATE:** June 4, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Aviation Boulevard Extension Concept (US 1 – 41<sup>st</sup> Street) Project Update

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It is requested that the information presented herein be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of June 18, 2019.

**DESCRIPTION & CONDITIONS**

37<sup>th</sup> Street is a vital corridor in Indian River County, as it is the primary point of access to the Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital and to a large number of medical-related facilities and businesses. The road is rapidly approaching capacity, and widening 37<sup>th</sup> Street presents a number of construction and operational challenges.

One alternative to widening 37<sup>th</sup> Street is to develop a new 2-lane alternative roadway (Aviation Blvd. extension) that would relieve the demand on 37<sup>th</sup> Street. This alternative has been considered by County and City public works and planning staff and is now incorporated into the County's five-year capital improvements program. As depicted on Attachment 1, the proposed new roadway alignment will connect the intersection of US 1 at Aviation Boulevard directly to 37<sup>th</sup> Street, along the west perimeter of the hospital campus and extend north of 37<sup>th</sup> Street to 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

Previously, the MPO, BCC, and Indian River County Hospital District have supported the alternative roadway concept. The BCC requested that staff provide periodic updates as to the project's status. This item provides an update and an opportunity for the Board to authorize staff to move forward with the project.

**ANALYSIS**

In assessing the area in the vicinity of the hospital, it appears that much of the land north and southwest of the hospital campus is presently vacant and/or underdeveloped. County Public Works Staff has developed conceptual alignments and staff from both Departments have begun

reaching out to property owners to discuss the concept and future right-of-way acquisition. The results of those efforts, from North to South, are described below (see map, Attachment 1):

### **North-South Connection (41<sup>st</sup> Street – 37<sup>st</sup> Street)**

It is anticipated that the future 2-lane roadway will connect 41<sup>st</sup> Street to 37<sup>th</sup> Street via a continuation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Dr. Hugh McCrystal Drive corridor. The Indian River County Hospital District, in coordination with Cleveland Clinic representatives, has requested that the new alignment remain as far to the west as possible in relation to the Behavioral Health Center building. County staff believes that a more western alignment will improve the configuration and function of the future signalized intersection at 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Dr. Hugh McCrystal Drive.

The County is in the process of acquiring the vacant former Surgical Care building at 1200 37<sup>th</sup> Street to provide right-of-way for the more western alignment, to provide buffering for the Center, and to allow for improved driveway connection spacing and 37<sup>th</sup> Street intersection configuration. The County obtained a property appraisal of \$1,550,000 for the Surgical Care building and Public Works staff made a preliminary offer to the owner of the appraisal price. The owner has accepted the offer subject to BCC approval and completing a Phase 1 environmental study. The alignment will continue north to 41<sup>st</sup> Street through the conceptually approved Harbor Bluffs development. The Harbor Bluffs developer is coordinating with an adjacent property owner (Riverfront Groves, Inc.) and staff on a right-of-way agreement. One or more right-of-way agreements involving those properties will be presented to the BCC at a future date.

### **Dr. Hugh McCrystal Drive/35<sup>th</sup> Lane**

The County has identified available right-of-way on the Hospital District campus (the existing western perimeter driveway/corridor) and is proposing a slight westward reconfiguration of the intersection of McCrystal Drive and 37<sup>th</sup> Street to line up with the new roadway north of 37<sup>th</sup> Street. The remaining right-of-way on McCrystal Drive is owned by the Hospital District, which will enter into a dedication agreement with the County once alignment particulars are laid-out and a draft agreement is worked out.

### **35<sup>th</sup> Lane to US 1@Aviation Boulevard**

35<sup>th</sup> Lane will need to connect to the new 2-lane roadway which will extend in a southwesterly direction from 35<sup>th</sup> Lane to the intersection of US 1 and Aviation Boulevard. The majority of the new roadway will cross through property owned by Dr. William Mallon, who has met with staff on multiple occasions and expressed strong support for the project as well as a preference for the alignment attached to this staff report (see Attachment #2). Staff anticipates positive right-of-way negotiations with Dr. Mallon once design is undertaken in the fall.

To connect to the Mallon property, the County needs a small amount of right-of-way from the Vero Beach Physicians Building and the Grove Place Medical Center. The representatives of both entities have expressed an interest in the road project, and have discussed possible concessions

from the County in exchange for right-of-way. Staff anticipates making an offer on the needed right of way from these two properties late summer to early fall.

Finally, the new alignment must extend through private property situated along 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets immediately east of US 1 which is currently owned by RDC Phoenix, LLC. The property is mostly vacant currently zoned residential, and with three rental parcels currently owned by RDC. The property is split into three blocks of property, with the current alignment affecting the northern two blocks which Public Works obtained appraisals for. The first block of property (parcel 1), 1.87 acres, was appraised at \$110,000 and the second block of property (parcel 2), 2.51 acres, was appraised at \$170,000. County staff reached out to RDC and offered \$250,000 for parcel 1 and \$400,000 for parcel 2. The property owner has thus far rejected staff offers that were above appraised value, stating that they are going to stay with the asking price for parcel 1 of \$692,386.20 and parcel 2 of \$933,055.20. Public Works staff will discuss additional options with the Board in the coming months. As a last resort and with BCC approval, Public Works would contemplate the use of Eminent Domain action as a process to obtain the property. This would require 90% design of the preferred alignment. It is anticipated that such design would take 9 – 12 months to complete once initiated.

Staff is ready to move forward with design work and right-of-way acquisition activities, subject to Board authorization to proceed.

## **FUNDING**

The Capital Improvements Element (CIE) includes the widening of 37<sup>th</sup> Street to five lanes between US 1 and Indian River Blvd. For the five-year period of the CIE, the currently projected cost for widening 37<sup>th</sup> Street is \$7,227,000, which is funded with Optional Sales Tax revenue. The proposed Aviation Blvd. extension is listed in the CIE as an alternative to widening 37<sup>th</sup> Street. No funding is specified in the CIE for the Aviation Blvd. alternate project. The Aviation Blvd. extension is also eligible to be funded with impact fees or credits.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board authorize staff to proceed with procurement of design services and right-of-way acquisition activities for the Aviation Boulevard Extension.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1. Map of Road Segments
- Attachment 2. Aviation Boulevard Preferred Alignment