

Myakka River Trails Improvement Association, Inc.

Road Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 9, 2019

RIVER ROAD REBUILD PROJECT

At the annual meeting of the Myakka River Trails (MRT) Homeowners Association (HOA) on March 30, 2019, a Road Committee was formed to:

1. Open lines of communication between MRT and officials at both Sarasota County Transportation and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) concerning the **River Road Rebuild Project (Rebuild)**.
2. Request that the above-identified entities recognize MRT as a major stakeholder in the “Rebuild” by virtue of our two-mile frontage on River Road.
3. Obtain accurate information relative to all of the issues associated with this project that will impact MRT and convey this information to all owners.

On May 9, 2019 the committee met with Ms. Jennifer Marshall, P.E. of FDOT who has been named the Project Manager for the “Rebuild”. Also meeting with us was the Director of Sarasota County’s Public Works Department, Mr. Spencer Anderson, P.E. Both of these individuals were extremely informative and pledged to work with our community on issues impacting MRT.

The following represents the more salient issues discussed at this meeting.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

Approximately 5.5 miles from U.S. 41 to Interstate 75

Estimated Cost: \$46,000,000

Time Line – Project will be advertised for bid in May of 2020. Actual construction to begin in Summer of 2021 and completed in 2023.

RIGHT OF WAY (R.O.W.)

All of the additional ROW for this project has been obtained through agreements with landowners on the west side of River Road.

JURISDICTION

Currently, River Road is a county road. That is changing as the result of a “road swap” agreement between the county and the state. The “Rebuild” will be carried out by FDOT and upon completion the road will be maintained by FDOT with a designation of SR 777.

DESIGN/BUILD

The contract for this project will be design/build. The firm selected will be expected to update the engineering and drawings and bring them to current standards and into compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations. When this phase is completed, the same firm will oversee all aspects of the actual construction.

ROADWAY

Route 41 to Center Road: 6 – 12' lanes (3 Northbound and 3 Southbound)

Center Road to Interstate 75: 4 - 12' lanes (2 Northbound and 2 Southbound)

MEDIANS/SHOULDERS

A continuous 12' median will run the length of the project.

Roadside shoulders will include sidewalks on both sides of the road and swales to collect runoff from the roadways. There are no dedicated bike paths in the plans.

LANDSCAPING

The current plans do not include landscaping for the median and shoulders, although both Mr. Anderson and Ms. Marshall expect some landscaping such as trees will be added. The committee suggested that the developers of West Villages and Grand Palm might be amenable to enhancing any landscape plan in keeping with the improvements already made along U.S. 41 and Center Road.

ELEVATION

Currently, both River Road and MRT's "common driveway" are at an elevation of 6'. The design elevation of the new roadway will be raised to 8-10'.

UTILITIES

At this time, there are no plans to extend a water main along the two-mile frontage of MRT. Similarly, there are no plans to install a force main for sewage. The natural gas line currently buried along the Southbound shoulder will be relocated to the new Southbound shoulder.

LIGHTING

The extent to which the roadway will have lighting has not yet been determined. Our committee suggested that if the road is lighted, that the most modern LED lighting be used and that it be “downcast” and not illuminating the night sky.

MRT ENTRANCES (NORTH, MAIN, SOUTH)

No signalized entrances.

North and South entrances - Right turn in and right turn out.

Main entrance – Northbound - Right turn with dedicated de-celeration lane.

Southbound access to main entrance. - There will be a “controlled entry, median indent” that will allow “stacking” for approximately 6 vehicles turning left into MRT.

Why no signalization at the main gate, especially considering the additional traffic associated with the new North Port Dog Park which is located immediately across from the main gate?

In the “lingo” of transportation departments, signalizing the main entrance would require that it “meet warrants”. A number of factors go into “meeting warrants” but the primary consideration is based on traffic counts, i.e., volume of traffic. It is unlikely that the trip counts generated from MRT plus those of the dog park would meet the requisite threshold for signalization. Nevertheless, the road committee stressed that our residents would strongly prefer a signal light at that location.

Crosswalk– Only one along the entire two–mile frontage of MRT! This will be located at West Villages Parkway.

STORMWATER

The new roadway will more than triple the amount of impervious surface, which means also a tripling of the amount of stormwater to be managed. Only one new retention pond will be constructed and it will be located on a portion of the Jelks Preserve. The committee voiced a significant concern that stormwater must be managed in a way that does not adversely impact our community, especially those properties that are contiguous with River Road. This is an issue that needs to be closely monitored by the Association.

NOISE MITIGATION

There is a heightened awareness on the part of Federal and State governments that highway noise represents a significant adverse impact to neighboring communities.

One need only travel along Interstate 75 to see the increase in walls or sound baffles designed to mitigate noise impacts. Clearly, the new road with its increased capacity and higher elevation will generate more noise. Ms. Marshall stated that FDOT will take a new look at whether the community and/or individual properties might meet the standard for physical noise barriers. She also promised to forward to me the detailed methodology the state will use to make these determinations.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED

Fire hydrants. This would translate into improved safety on the roadway and would decrease the area's vulnerability to wildfire.

Fence. A continuous 4' high minimum, hogwire fence would delineate the property line between the roadway's R.O.W. and the private properties of MRT

Submitted: Bob Earley 5/21/2019

Committee Members:

Chuck McMichael

Dan Tremblay

Tom Mack

John Hull (John was out of town for the 5/9/2019 meeting)

Bob Earley