

SW 53 Street / Palm Avenue Median Background

During the design and planning phase of the Palm Avenue widening project, Broward County – the managers of the project – held several public meetings in 2009 to inform residents about the project and garner their feedback.

At the November, 2009 public meeting a power point presentation was conducted to show the proposed design of the road. At this meeting the initial design presented showed the median at 53 Street to be a fully closed median (**this diagram is included in the agenda back up information**). Numerous residents at the meeting spoke and requested the County redesign the median to allow for left turn access into and out of 53 Street, the same as other streets that intersected Palm Avenue.

The County responded to the residents request and redesigned the intersection to accommodate the ability to make the left hand turns in and out at 53 Street. This has been the final design plan in the project since 2010.

During the construction in 2013, the work would at times create a slow down in the traffic flow on Palm Avenue, especially at the intersection of Griffin Road at the morning and afternoon peak rush hours. This slow down, in all likelihood, increased the vehicular traffic on streets like 53 and 51 Streets, as cars would use those streets to travel between 106 Avenue and Palm in an attempt to navigate around the slow down at Griffin.

At the September 12, 2013 Council meeting, a resident who resides on 53 Street spoke to the Council about the increased traffic on that street. He spoke for many residents who reside on 53 Street, and made a request that the median at Palm and 53 Street be closed as was shown in the original design. The Council voted to schedule a workshop to discuss the issue. (**minutes of the Sept. 12 meeting are included in the backup information**)

The Council conducted a Workshop on October 17, 2013 to discuss the issue of traffic on 53 Street and the residents request to close the Palm Avenue median. After public comment on the issue, Mr. Richard Tornese and Mr. Bryan Williams from Broward County Traffic Engineering, discussed several options with the Council members. They proposed installing temporary traffic control devices at the median location of 53 Street on Palm Avenue which would restrict left hand turns in and out at the intersection. These temporary measures would remain in place for a few months to allow time for public comment on this configuration. Based on the feedback on the temporary closure, the County would take steps to reopen the median or make the closure permanent. This option was unanimously accepted by the Council members. (**minutes of the Oct. 17 meeting are included in the backup information**)

The road construction is substantially complete, and staff is seeking direction on what action regarding the 53 Street / Palm Avenue median is to be requested of the County. It is important to keep in mind that Palm Avenue is a Broward County road, and any actions other than those already agreed upon, would have to be submitted to the County for their approval. Also, any changes to the agreed upon plans – even with the County's approval – may have to be done at the City's expense.