



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Indian River County Hospital District

THROUGH: Stan Boling,  AICP; IRC Community Development Director

FROM: Phil Matson, AICP; MPO Staff Director 

DATE: January 7, 2019

SUBJECT: Request to Initiate Preparation of a Right-of-way Agreement for the Proposed Aviation Boulevard/McCrystal Drive Facility Improvement

It is requested that the information presented herein be given formal consideration by the Indian River County Hospital District at the meeting of January 17, 2019.

BACKGROUND

37th Street is a vital corridor in Indian River County, as it is the primary point of access to the Indian River Medical Center (IRMC) and to a large number of medical-related facilities and businesses. According to the County's concurrency management system, 37th Street is currently at more than 90% capacity. The implications of a roadway reaching capacity can include restriction of future development rights and severe congestion. As a result, funding has been allocated in the County's Capital Improvement Element (CIE) for the widening of 37th Street (US 1 – Indian River Boulevard) from 3 to 5 lanes and for an alternative to the widening project.

Besides being costly and intrusive, widening 37th Street presents a number of challenges, including disruptions during construction that could delay emergency traffic and interrupt normal traffic operations for all motorists. Therefore, several years ago, MPO and City of Vero Beach staff proposed developing a new 2-lane roadway directly from Aviation Boulevard at US1 to the West Entrances of the Medical Center as an alternative to widening 37th Street. According to FDOT, the new road, if constructed, would alleviate sufficient traffic to forestall or eliminate the need to widen 37th Street.

On April 18, 2018, County and MPO staff presented this alternative concept to the District for informational purposes. Since that time, staff has continued to coordinate with area property owners, refined the concept, and obtained BCC authorization to initiate right-of-way agreement negotiations with the District.

ANALYSIS

There is no better opportunity to construct the Aviation Boulevard/McCrystal Drive facility than the present time. That is because much of the land north and southwest of the Indian River Medical Center is vacant and/or underdeveloped where the new facility would be constructed (See Attachment 1). Accordingly, the Indian River County Public Works Director has developed two concepts described in detail below.

Aviation Boulevard Extension/McCrystal Drive, US 1 – 37th Street (South Segment)

This 2-lane connection would begin at the intersection of US 1 and Aviation Boulevard and connect to Dr. Hugh McCrystal Drive, providing access to the West Entrances of the Medical Center along the west perimeter of campus resulting in an upgraded, County-maintained road and new signal at 37th Street (Attachment 2). This can be accomplished via a number of alignments. County officials have met with property owners who are in agreement with the concept because of the access benefits it provides them. At this time the intersection alignment at 37th Street is not finalized as the County is reviewing alignment possibilities for the intersection and property acquisition in this area. It is possible that the final configuration will move the intersection to the west approximately 40-feet.

New North-South Connection, 37th Street - 41st Street (North Segment)

This 2-lane north-south roadway would align somewhere in the vicinity of 10th/11th Avenues and connect 41st Street directly to the new 37th Street signal to be located near the existing driveway entrance to the medical center on 37th Street (Attachment 3). That connection would create an upgraded County-maintained road that would enable traffic coming from the north to bypass 37th Street by turning eastbound on 41st Street and then southbound on the new roadway.

Other Considerations

To develop the roadway segments, the County needs consent from the Hospital District for the overall concept as well as cooperation in dedicating necessary rights-of-way. During preliminary discussions with District staff, there has generally been enthusiasm for the project, along with some concern about road noise affecting the rehabilitation center on the northeast corner of the alignment. Staff feels the center would be equally if not more inconvenienced by the widening of 37th Street on its south perimeter. Further, staff will make every effort to buffer and align the roadway so as to minimize impacts. More importantly, the concept provides the opportunity to accommodate traffic from future growth onto a roadway grid plan rather than allow the developers to build more unconnected driveways and access points. Finally, the concept relieves the Hospital District of expensive future roadway maintenance obligations, and provides two new approaches to the Medical Center Campus; one from the south and a second from the north.

County staff seeks District authorization to work with its staff to negotiate a draft right-of-way agreement for future consideration by the BCC and the District.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Hospital District consider the proposed north and south roadway segments and authorize District staff to work with County staff in preparing a draft agreement between the District and the County.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Vacant Land in the Vicinity of the Indian River Medical Center

Attachment 2. Aviation Boulevard Alternative Alignments