

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Tom Harmer, Town Manager
From: Isaac Brownman, Public Works Director
Report date: January 13, 2021
Meeting date: January 19, 2021
Subject: Midblock Crosswalk Safety Update

Recommended Action

None, informational only.

Background

In the Fall of 2019, the Town received complaints about the pedestrian crossings on Gulf of Mexico Drive ("SR 789"). Concerns were expressed about "near misses" with cars that did not stop for the yellow flashing lights and requested that the Town look into opportunities to improve safety. SR 789 is a State road that falls under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT"). The Town shared those concerns with the FDOT and requested a meeting to discuss ways to improve safety at the crossings. Town staff met with the FDOT on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 regarding enhanced safety for Longboat Key's six (6) mid-block Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon ("RRFB") pedestrian crossings across Gulf of Mexico Drive (SR 789). FDOT provided several suggestions for Town consideration.

Internally Illuminated Raised Pavement Markers (iiRPM)

iiRPM are in-pavement light features that light up when the button is pressed. Funding and timing of such a project would need to be further determined between the Town, FDOT and the MPO. The Town would be required to maintain this enhancement. An FDOT approved provider has informed the Town that initial installation carries a 2-year warranty. If the Town would like to contract with them for ongoing maintenance, their current annual rate is approximately \$4,000 per 2-lane crossing.

Raised Crosswalks with Step-Down Posted speed to 35-mph

A raised crosswalk can be added overtop of the existing crossings, creating a physical feature that a vehicle must slow down to traverse. FDOT believes these can be placed on 35-mph roadways and can be traversed at the lower speed, but not on a 45-mph roadway. Installation on Longboat Key would require a speed limit change on Gulf of Mexico Drive segments at each of the locations where the pavement would be raised.

Street Lighting

As part of the Utilities Undergrounding Project, it is currently planned to install lighting at each of the 6 mid-block crossings. FDOT agrees that this should greatly improve crossing visibility at dawn, dusk, and at night and supports the Town's effort. New mid-block crossings on FDOT roadways are now required to have lighting.

Advance RRFB

An additional set of RRFB signs with flashing beacons can be installed in advance of the crossings in both directions that also illuminate when the button is pressed. These would be in addition to the RRFBs at the crossing itself.

R1-6A In-Pavement Sign

A R1-6A In-Pavement Sign is an in pavement vertical sign similar to what was installed at Satellite Beach, Florida. FDOT indicated these are more geared for use on multi-lane roads, and tend to get hit on both low and high-speed roadways.

Enhanced Law Enforcement

FDOT also mentioned enhanced law enforcement presence, such as staging a patrol car at the crossing(s) from time-to-time, and also ensuring visibility with no vehicles obstructing sight distance near the crossings.

Conclusion

Staff considered the various strategies and are targeting two practical improvements that can enhance visibility and safety at the crossings. Staff is moving forward with the following to help enhance safety at the mid-block pedestrian crosswalks on Gulf of Mexico Drive (SR 789):

- Work with FDOT and MPO on potential funding and timing of a project to furnish and install Internally Illuminated Reflective Pavement Markings ("iiRPM") that would be maintained by the Town.
- Mid-Block crossing lighting to be furnished and installed by the Town as part of the Utilities Undergrounding Project

The Police Department is aware of the safety enhancement discussion and will also be assisting the Town with monitoring the crossings from an enforcement standpoint.

Staff Recommendation

None, informational only.

Attachments

- A. Attachment A (Available from Town Clerk's Office)
- B. PowerPoint Presentation (Available from Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item