

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Tom Harmer, Town Manager
From: Isaac Brownman, Public Works Director
Report date: November 9, 2021
Meeting date: November 15, 2021
Subject: Gulf of Mexico Drive (State Road 789) Complete Streets Corridor Plan Update

Recommended Action

None, informational only.

Background

In 2013, the Town invited the Urban Land Institute to Longboat Key to perform an Advisory Services Panel Study. One recommendation from the study included potential enhancements to Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD). In 2017, the Town explored conceptual design elements that might be possible for GMD, including a visual flythrough video.

Earlier this year, the Town obtained results from an Annual Citizen Survey. Based on questions in the survey, results indicated comparative favorability towards the importance of pedestrian crossings, medians and landscaping, and bicycle lanes along GMD.

Based on the work in 2017, the Town engaged Kimley-Horn and Associates (KHA) to develop a Gulf of Mexico Drive Complete Streets Corridor Master Plan, to include strategies for segments along the full 10-mile roadway corridor. KHA notes that a 'complete streets' approach to corridor plan elements can help increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, reduce congestion, improve connectivity, improve aesthetics, and enhance the Town's sense of place. This current effort to complete a Corridor Master Plan is consistent with the Town's past efforts to advance designs for improvements to the State Road and related right of way with the goal of then petitioning the State to fund the actual construction.

There are a number of ongoing initiatives along Gulf of Mexico Drive, including pedestrian/bicycle crossing counts and analyses, the Barrier Island Traffic Study, Broadway Roundabout design, and Country Club Shores Left-Turn Lane design (includes wider bike lanes, reduced lane width, and planted medians). The Broadway Roundabout and Country Club Shores Turn-Lane can be considered the beginnings of complete streets corridor plan implementation.

A number of corridor plan elements and capabilities for a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) roadway corridor are dependent on roadway speed. For example, KHA notes that these can generally include clear zone offset distances from the edge of road travel-way, lane widths, median features, crosswalk treatments,

perception of safety and others. Complete Streets elements to consider for GMD are pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, lighting, streetscaping, and landscaping. Location, dimensions, placement and capability of these improvements are partially a function of roadway speed. Therefore, a significant consideration for the development of a GMD Complete Streets Corridor Plan is the targeted posted speed being either 35-mph or 45-mph for some or all of the roadway segments. A 40-mph posted speed does not accomplish the design considerations that a 35-mph roadway allows (reduced clear zone, reduced lane widths, larger plantings, curb types, drainage). Currently the speed limit entering the Town on both the north and south ends of the island is 35 mph but quickly transitions to 45 mph during most of the GMD stretch. The Country Club Shores turn lane project segment (approximately 1 mile) is to be constructed at a design speed of 40mph. During the 2021 Citizen Survey, one of the questions asked about the importance of lowering the speed on GMD. 30% of the residents said it was very/somewhat important and 46% said it was very/somewhat unimportant. Based on open ended comments the survey also noted that the residents are fairly divided on this issue.

Aesthetically, the Town has already selected a highway and neighborhood lighting style and will be working towards a multi-purpose pathway light style. The Town is also seeking FDOT support to improve the multi-purpose trail on the East side from its current condition and dimension.

Next steps include the following:

- Develop preliminary concepts: 35-mph vs. 45-mph roadway cross-sections
- Initial Town Commission Feedback regarding Preferred Typical Section(s)
- Hold follow-up public Workshops for the concept(s), including Town Commission meeting(s)
- Develop initial cost estimates, and a Phasing and Implementation Plan

Staff Recommendation

None, informational only.

Attachments

PowerPoint Presentation (Available from Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item