

The following is a transcript of the Laurel Road Public Meeting

Held via Webinar on November 15, 2022, 5:30 PM – 6:45 PM

****information edited post dictation to correct errors in dictation***

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the November 15th, 2022 public meeting for the Laurel Rd widening project. We are delighted to have you join us here this evening. I'm your host, Ben Quartermaine **Stantec – Design Engineer**. Along with me is Frank Domingo **Stantec - Transportation Engineer** and staff to assist us with this presentation.

Before we get started with our presentation, we'd like to go over a few housekeeping rules to help the meeting run smoothly, safe and comfortable for you. Since we have a tight schedule here this evening, we will not be utilizing the raise hand function during the webinar. Just due to time constraints, the format of this meeting has been provided by Sarasota County government. We are following the exact format that the County uses for capital improvement public meetings. We invite you to ask your questions at any time during this webinar. We have a dedicated e-mail address designed specifically for public meetings which can be used at any time. The address is laurelroadpublicmeeting@stantec.com.

Don't worry, this e-mail address will be listed on virtually every sheet of the presentation coming up. But again its laurelroadpublicmeeting@stantec.com. E-mail your questions and we'll do our best to answer your questions after the presentation. Some of you have already e-mailed questions to this e-mail address and again, we'll try to answer those questions as we go. We're going to monitor that e-mail address and as time permits, we'll answer questions. However, you as an audience will only have listening and viewing capabilities. This is designed to minimize any potential interruptions throughout the webinar, so we have time to answer your questions. We will be giving the microphone to Frank and myself throughout the presentation as needed to respond to questions. Again, feel free to submit questions to that e-mail address at any time during the presentation. Now I'm going to shift over to our presentation.

The meeting is being recorded tonight and will be available upon request and will be shared with all of the e-mail addresses that have registered for tonight's meeting. Also available will be a list of all the questions listed anonymously and the answers to those questions that we can provide answers to. It's important to note that this meeting is specifically for the Laurel Rd. widening from Knights Trail to Jacaranda Blvd.

This is a quick agenda for the meeting introduction and meeting details we went over we're into the presentation. Have a feeling this is going to last about 30 minutes. We'll get into a Q&A session. And then end the public meeting. As I mentioned. The e-mail address is available on all of the screens laurelroadpublicmeeting@stantec.com. E-mail your questions and we'll do our best to answer those questions as we move forward through the presentation. We've covered the meeting format. I just want to stress that this is consistent with Sarasota County's webinars for public meetings.

The meeting format as I mentioned is consistent with the Sarasota County's public webinar format. On our team is Kathleen Weeden, the City of Venice, City engineer. Ken Stokes with Sarasota County is the contact. And my name again is Ben Quartermaine with Stantec. And we are the design engineer for the

project. The meeting purpose is to provide project details, share design and permitting schedule and answer questions regarding the project. Laurel Road is an existing two lane roadway and we're proposing to widen a 1.4 mile stretch from Knights Trail to Jacaranda Blvd.

The following shows the project location **adjacent** to the developments that exist along the corridor. At the bottom of the screen running East West is Border Rd. I-75 is shown along the western portion of the map. Gene Green Road, shown on the north. And the Myakka River is shown on the right hand side of the graph.

Sarasota County has classified Laurel Rd as a four lane major arterial. In the **County's Comprehensive Plan – 2040** future thoroughfare plan. Major arterials are defined by the County's comprehensive plan as roadways that facilitate relatively long trip links at moderate to high operating speeds with somewhat limited access to adjacent properties. Major arterials generally serve major centers of activity, in urban areas and have the highest traffic volumes. There are a handful of residential properties that exist along the Laurel corridor. However, the majority of the properties are either platted commercial or platted residential communities. Starting at Knight's Trail and moving West are **the** residential areas of Mirasol, Toscana Isles, Willow Chase and the Venetian River Club on the north side of the corridor. And residential parcels, Vistera Development, Fiore Development and Cielo Development along the South side of the corridor.

The project current conditions consist of a two-lane road. With a four-**foot wide** lane bike lane, minimal shoulder, inconsistent curbing along the roadway, no stormwater or drainage, minimal lighting, County and FDOT owned roadway. It's a County and FDOT owned roadway within the City limits.

The project purpose. This corridor is changing. This corridor is changing, as residents, you see it every day. The proposed purpose of the project is simple. The widening of the road will provide needed vehicular capacity to accommodate existing and future traffic. The proposed improvements are consistent with the County's comprehensive plan and traffic circulation policies. The project will provide an efficient transportation network that considers the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorists. The proposed improvements include a multi-use trail connection between park **properties** on either end of the corridor. The roadway will be designed as an evacuation route. Considering the 100 year, 24 hour floodplain. As Hurricane Ian has recently showed us, we are vulnerable to heavy weather and this area experienced some of the greatest rainfall ever recorded in the Myakka basin. What that means is that there were flood elevations recorded that were 5' to 6' higher than what we had ever previously seen. And flows along the Myakka River 4 times greater than what had ever been measured. And with all of that rainfall, the important design element from the stormwater perspective, was that the Laurel Road will function as an evacuation route during even the most extreme rainfall events.

The next slide shows project information. This is, as we mentioned, the joint effort between the City of Venice and Sarasota County. Again, it's within the city limits, but it's right away that's owned by the County and FDOT. FDOT owns the western portion of the corridor from Knights Trail, about to the Mirasol development. We are currently at approximately 50% design phase. Again, just a reminder, if you have any questions, go ahead and e-mail them to this e-mail address at the bottom of the screen.

This slide shows a typical session of the proposed roadway. We're proposing a 4-lane divided roadway with shoulder and 7-foot bike lanes on either side. We're proposing 11' travel lanes. We're proposing a 10-foot **wide** multi-use recreational trail along the south side of the corridor as well as a 5-foot sidewalk

along the north side of the corridor. You can see, this portion is a portion of the existing road. We're intending to utilize the existing roadway as part of the proposed westbound lanes. We understand and will ensure that, existing pavement and the existing base of the existing roadway is consistent with the proposed roadway base and ensure that there is life in that pavement. Otherwise, that existing pavement and base will be replaced as part of the improvements. The width of this median will vary depending on where we are in the corridor. And the reason for that is very simple. There are several large water mains along this corridor. The Peace River Water Authority has a **42" 48-inch** water main running along Laurel Road. The County has water mains and sewer mains. The City also has large water mains and sewer mains. So what we're attempting to do with our design is to keep those water mains underneath the median. To do so the median width will be at the smallest about 18-feet **wide** and at the widest approximately 38-feet. So it will vary as we go along the corridor to keep the majority of those water lines in the median. There are portions, small portions of those water mains, that will be under turn lanes. But we're keeping them out of the travel lanes.

Other design elements of the project include additional street lighting. There are some street lights along the corridor now. We'll make sure that the street is lit to FDOT standard. We're improving the sidewalks, the bicycle lanes and the multi-use recreational path. We're improving the median and providing a landscape median. Stormwater treatment and storage will be accommodated through shared use ponds that are currently being built with the development adjacent to the corridor on the south side. The road will be designed with curb and gutter and there will be a signal installed at the Laurel Road **and** Jacaranda Boulevard intersection. Some additional right of way will be needed to accommodate the improvements. However, approximately 80% of the right of way is available.

Regarding project access, we'll start at Knights Trail on the west and move east. And the first location is the Mirasol Town Center. Mirasol is proposed to be a full median opening and what that means is that it will accommodate traffic in all directions.

As we move east the next intersection is with the Willow Chase Development. On Ancora Blvd will be another median opening with the **Visterra** Development to the south.

Moving east the next intersection is Girasoli Lane. That would be a full, **intersection** opening for the Fiori development.

The next intersection is Veneto Blvd. and that will be a full median opening allowing for the movement of traffic in all directions as well. Initially this was designed as a left turn movement, but the County has issued a variance to allow for a full median opening at this intersection. And allow for the residents of the Venetian to make both a right and left hand turns east-west eastbound and westbound.

At Jacaranda Blvd. we're proposing a traffic signal. The intersection access type was coordinated with the fire station and the City and the County. We considered several different access types at this intersection. A roundabout was considered. But ultimately, based on conversations with the fire station, it was determined that a signal would provide the safest intersection control as well as provide for the quickest response time from the fire station.

One of the design elements of this project is the multi-use recreational trail. And as I mentioned, that's designed from a park setting on either end. The City of Venice owns a park property here towards the Knights Trail end of the corridor and this multi-use recreational trail will extend along the south side of

Laurel Rd. to Jacaranda Blvd. and then in the 8-foot **wide** extension will extend the multi-use trail all the way to the Venice Myakka River Park at the end of Laurel Rd. And what that provides is a recreational component for all of the properties along the corridor. The trail is 10-foot wide in this area proposed. As I mentioned, it's got a park connection on either end. It's a paved trail with shoulder and adjacent lighting for safety.

Project permitting. The project is in the City of Venice and will be permitted through and reviewed through the City of Venice. The roadway is ultimately owned and operated by Sarasota County. Sarasota County will review and permit the improvements as well. South Florida Water Management District will provide a permit for stormwater design, which includes water quality, water quantity and floodplain. The FDOT will provide a permit based on the fact that they own a portion of the right of way. FDEP will provide an environmental permit associated with any waters of the state, wetlands or other environmental features that are impacted as part of proposed improvements.

The project timeline is. Today is the public meeting. We will have a permit submittal to the Southwest Florida Water Management District by the end of this month. In December, we expect to submit permits to the City of Venice and Sarasota County. As well as the FDOT and FDEP. In May of 23. We're proposing a construction workshop to review the construction plans and discuss how construction would impact you as a user of this corridor on a daily basis and how the construction will be planned to ensure that you have complete access 24 hours a day through the construction area. The final construction plans are expected in June of 2023.

And now we'll move to the questions.

Questions and answers are listed in a separate document.