



Carlos Alvarez, Mayor

Public Works
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February 9, 2011

Honorable Marc Sarnoff
Commissioner District 2
City of Miami
3500 Pan American Drive
Miami, Florida 33133

Re: Belle Meade Neighborhood

Dear Commissioner Sarnoff,

In response to your inquiry to Miami Dade County Commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson regarding the closing of pedestrian access to the Belle Meade neighborhood, please be advised that the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department (PWD) reviewed the proposal and offers the following comments:

The *Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways* ("Florida Greenbook"), developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), provides minimum standards for the design and maintenance of County and municipal roadway systems, including pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks. Chapter 8 of the Greenbook, provides that "All new highways, except limited access highways, should be designed and constructed under the assumption they will be used by pedestrians." Chapter 15 of the Greenbook provides that if traffic diverters are being installed to redirect vehicular traffic, such as a street closure, as has been in the Belle Meade neighborhood, "Bicyclists and pedestrians should be provided access through traffic diverters." (see pages 8-1 and 15-11 of the attached Greenbook).

The Greenbook provisions are consistent with the *Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Development Master Plan* (CDMP), which provides that pedestrian and vehicular networks should serve as connectors between neighborhoods, while the walling off of a neighborhood from arterial roadways should be avoided. It further states that pedestrian circulation shall be provided between public places through connectivity of sidewalks and supplemented by pedestrian paths (see page I-27 of the attached CDMP Land Use Element).

Furthermore, the *Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System*, published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, states that if a street closure is implemented, it should always allow for the free through movement of all pedestrians, including wheelchair users, and bicyclists. Moreover, emergency vehicles should be able to access the barricaded streets. Additionally, street closures must be implemented so as "not to adversely affect access to destinations in the community by pedestrians and bicyclists" (see page 94 of the attached Countermeasures Chapter 5).

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Therefore, based on the attached local, state, and federal provisions and as stated by our Assistant County Attorney's e-mail (see also attached), the modification of the existing barricaded streets to include blocking pedestrian access along the sidewalks in the Belle Meade neighborhood cannot be allowed. However, as an option pedestrian free movement may be provided through the installation of concrete pipe bollards.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Calas", written in a cursive style.

Esther L. Calas, P.E., Director
Miami-Dade County
Public Works Department

Attachments

cc: Honorable Audrey M. Edmonson
Miami-Dade County Commissioner, District 3

Marta Martinez-Aleman, Commission Aide
District 3

Joan Shen, Ph.D., P.E., PTOE
Assistant Chief, Traffic Engineering Division