

SARASOTA COUNTY
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

BCC#14032

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236
phone: 941-861-5344 fax: 941-861-5987

July 17, 2014

Billy L. Hattaway, P.E.
Florida Department of Transportation
District 1 Secretary
801 North Broadway Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830

Dear Secretary Hattaway:

Please accept my appreciation for you and your staff's continued support of Sarasota County's projects, priorities, and initiatives. Your efforts have definitely assisted in improving Sarasota County, and the municipalities within Sarasota County.

As you are aware, Interstate 75 serves as a key corridor and entry into our community. The interchange at Interstate 75/Laurel Road serves as a key gateway to the City of Venice, as well as south and central Sarasota County. At this time, the interchange is somewhat void of landscaping and features that set it apart and define it as the community gateway for which it serves. Creating a gateway feature and improving the look at Laurel Road and Interstate 75 is very important to the county, so much so, it was adopted as one of Sarasota County's Strategic Initiatives.

The Board of County Commissioners understands that funding is available to the Florida Department of Transportation districts for landscaping or tree planting improvement projects on the state highway system. One such project the Board has been impressed with is the recently completed tree planting effort at Interstate 75/U.S. 301.

By transmittal of this letter, the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners requests consideration be given to Interstate 75/Laurel Road for an installation of landscaping similar to that which was recently completed at Interstate 75/U.S. 301.

I have included for your consideration messages from the community supporting a landscaping project. As you can see, it is definitely a community priority.

Thank you for your thoughtful and careful consideration. If you have any questions please, feel free to contact County Engineer James Harriott at 941-861-0937 or jharriot@scgov.net.

Sincerely,

Signed in his absence to avoid delay

Charles D. Hines
Chairman

Attachments

c: Sarasota County Commission
 Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator
 James K. Harriott, Jr., P.E., County Engineer

Dear Commissioner Robinson,

The I-75/Laurel Road interchange is an important gateway for people entering the wonderful Venice community we call home. It is essential that this entryway reflect the beauty and vitality of our community: for families that choose to live here, for businesses that sustain our economy, and for visitors that are drawn here.

I understand that there is a FDOT program that has funds to beautify I-75 interchanges. A beautification project to improve this interchange would be a solid investment in our region.

Here at Gulf Coast Community Foundation, we care deeply about this community and fully support any efforts to landscape and beautify this area.

Warmest regards,
Teri

Teri A Hansen

President | CEO

941.486.4601 c 941.223.1755

GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Dear Commissioner Robinson,

I was very excited to hear about how much attention is being given to the suggestion of installing landscaping around the I75/Laure Rd. interchange. I know it's still the infantile stages but with yours, the City of Venice, and local residents support, it truly can become a reality.

I thank you again for perusing this project which will, no doubt, serve to further enhance and attract countless travelers to our beautiful and friendly community.

Respectfully,
Tony Pellegrino
President, Willow Chase
Homeowners Association

From: "Laurel J. Bean" <secretary.1854@hotmail.com>
Date: July 3, 2014 at 11:54:48 AM EDT
To: Christine Robinson <crobinso@scgov.net>
Subject: Interchange Beautification

Venice/Nokomis ELKS Lodge #1854
1021 Discovery Way
North Venice, FL 34275

July 3, 2014

Ms. Christine Robinson
Sarasota County Commissioner
Sarasota, FL

Dear Commissioner Robinson,

Several years ago, Venice/Nokomis ELKS Lodge #1854 moved from downtown Venice to the North Venice area. We are located on Knights Trail Road, a few hundred yards north of Laurel Road. Our move to this location was in no small part due to the potential this area offered as a base for new membership. With all the approved commercial and residential real estate plans in the area, North Venice has become a major growth area in Sarasota County and plans indicate that we can expect further expansion in the near future.

Unfortunately, beautification of the area has not kept pace with the development. The I-75/Laurel Road interchange is an important gateway to the entire area and is in great need of upgrading. A landscaping beautification project would go a long way in meeting this goal.

We understand the FDOT has a program under which they spend 1% of road funds on concentrated landscaping projects. Such a project has recently been completed at the I-75 Ellenton, Florida interchange. A similar project at the Laurel Road interchange would add considerably to the beautification of the North Venice area.

We respectfully ask for your support in seeing what can be done to bring a 1% FDOT beautification project to the I-75 Laurel Road interchange.

Sincerely,

Commissioners-

The state spending \$1 million on landscaping for the Ellenton I-75 exchange is impressive. The landscaping that was chosen is not. None of those trees or palms are native to Florida. Some (i.e. the Jacaranda and Poinciana) are the least recommended tropical trees due to their weak resistance in hurricane/high winds. In fact, Royal and Foxtail palms are only recommended for hardiness zones 10a-11 due to their cold sensitivity (typically these palms should not be planted north of Punta Gorda). Not even our native Sabal Palm was included. It's bad enough to see what inspired Ponce de Leon to name this land "Florida" slowly being totally paved over. This type of landscaping only perpetuates the notion to superficially create what people THINK Florida should look like, instead of embracing its unique, real beauty. I hope if and when it's petitioned that this "bold landscaping" is considered for our local interchanges, the tree and palm choices are more carefully considered to reflect and respect our native landscape. I will attempt to get in touch with our FDOT District 1 office (Secretary Billy Hattaway) to share my concerns.

Alice White

People for Trees, Inc. Since 1997

(941)426-9752

"Save a tree today, and we'll all breathe a little easier!"

Laurel Road Property, LLC
7350 Point of Rocks Road
Sarasota, FL 34242

June 23, 2014

Sarasota County Commissioners
1660 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Dear Commissioners,

I represent the property owner of a 50-acre vacant mixed use project on the corner of Knights Trail Road and Laurel Road in North Venice. We recently rezoned this property and worked closely with the *neighboring residents to ensure our project maintains the architectural integrity of the neighborhood, once construction does commence.* As I am sure you are aware, the North Venice/ East Laurel Road area is planned to become a significant growth corridor for the County. Therefore, we see the I-75 and Laurel Road interchange as an important gateway to both North Venice and Venice.


I was recently approached by numerous residents, who are spearheading an effort to improve the image of this interchange to reflect the splendor of the surrounding community. To this end, I'm in full support of any effort to move this beautification project forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Laurel Road Property, LLC, a Florida limited liability company

By: ACK Property Management, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company
As its Manager

By: 
John R. Peshkin
As its Manager

cc: City of Venice City Council

From: John Moeckel [jcminfl@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, June 06, 2014 4:35 PM

To: Christine Robinson

Cc: John Moeckel; Sue Glass

Subject: Laurel Road Improvement Request/Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association

Ms. Christine Robinson

County Commissioner

1660 Ringling Boulevard

Sarasota , FL 34236

**RE: Roadway improvements on Laurel Road
between Pinebrook and Albee Farm Road**

Dear Commissioner Robinson,

Our Association is very pleased with the proposed asphalt resurfacing of the roadway on Laurel Road scheduled for this summer. As we have discussed in the past, this is a major gateway road to North Venice and is in much need of improvement. The condition of the roadway and the sidewalk/road shoulder are greatly in need of upgrading. I know that there will be a series of budget workshops in late June to deal with the roadway upgrade. I would request that those attending the workshops also deal with the shoulder and sidewalks on both sides of Laurel Road. Many bike riders and walkers use this route to get to the Legacy Trail, and in the current condition, it is very unsafe and esthetically unpleasing. In addition, Laurel Nokomis Elementary School is located on the South side of Laurel and during the school year there is even a more intensive use of this area.

I am attaching pictures that show the current condition of the sidewalk and shoulder. Currently there is a gravel area between the road and the sidewalk. There will be a great deal of additional traffic with all of the new developments all along Laurel Road in the near future. The safety issues will only increase.

If possible, the time to undertake these improvements is at the same time as the asphalt resurfacing project or as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

**John Moeckel, President
Venetian Golf & River Club
Community Association**