

LAS OLAS BOULEVARD MOBILITY PROJECT WESTERN CORRIDOR

Meeting with Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association (DFLCA)

 **Location:** Monthly Board Meeting (via Zoom)
 **Date:** November 5, 2025
Time: 5:30-6:30 PM

Attendees

Melinda Bowker President, DFLCA	Milos Majstorovic Director, Transportation and Mobility Department
Lianne Rubbo Vice President, DFLCA	Catherine Prince WSP USA
Daniela Mairowitz Treasurer, DFLCA	Erica Echeverri Brizaga, Inc.
Bob Cerrone Recording Secretary, DFLCA	
Elijah Manly Communications Secretary, DFLCA	
Greg Madonna Director, DFLCA	
Lorena Melgarejo Director, DFLCA	
Bill Ott Director, DFLCA	
(8 of 11 board members present)	

Meeting Purpose

City staff and consultants attended the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association's monthly board meeting to brief members on the Las Olas Boulevard Mobility Project (Western Corridor) ahead of the public town hall meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 13, 2025. The discussion focused on the Downtown and Shops segments of the corridor, providing an overview of the current design development, alternatives, costs, and next steps.

Project Background

Milos opened the presentation with background on the project's evolution. The Las Olas Mobility Project began in 2019, originally led by Commissioners Glassman and Sorensen. A working group was formed to represent the various neighborhood and business associations along the corridor. The Consultant team facilitated the initial outreach and conceptual planning phase, hosting over 90 meetings with community stakeholders.

The Fort Lauderdale City Commission endorsed the corridor vision in 2021, establishing the foundation for detailed design. WSP (Western Corridor) and Kimley-Horn (Eastern Corridor) were selected to carry the vision into engineering design.

The WSP Consultant team is now presenting preliminary design concepts to civic and business groups before taking the updated corridor plan to the City Commission in December 2025 for direction on specific design decisions—most notably, whether to retain or remove the median in the Shops section.

After Commission guidance, the project will advance to 60% design, followed by a new design-build solicitation to finalize the design from 60% to 100%.

Presentation Summary

I. Downtown Section (Andrews Avenue to SE 5th Avenue).

Catherine presented the design concepts advancing the 2021 Las Olas Mobility Vision cross sections.

- A. Key Design Elements:
 - 1. Raised intersection at SE 1st Avenue for enhanced pedestrian visibility and traffic calming.
 - 2. Improvements between Andrews and SE 1st Avenue:
 - a) Sidewalks widened by 1–7 feet along the south side.
 - b) Raised mid-block crosswalk with RRFB to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity to the NSU Art Museum and park entrance.
 - c) Traffic islands to manage vehicle turning movements.
 - 3. Landscape improvements:

- a) 43 shade trees and 75 flowering trees.
 - b) Three times the tree canopy was added in the Downtown area.
- 4. All existing travel lanes and parking are maintained.
- 5. Median extension to SE 1st Avenue.
- B. Estimated Construction Cost: ≈ \$5.0 million *(Excludes CEI and wayfinding costs.)*

II. Q and A Downtown Section

The discussion began with questions about how the proposed improvements would affect existing conditions and how much flexibility the design team had to incorporate past community requests.

- A. Bill Ott asked whether the additional sidewalk and landscaped space proposed along Huizenga Park would be taken from park property or from the existing roadway.
 - 1. Catherine Prince clarified that all improvements are being made within the existing right-of-way and would not encroach upon park property.
- B. Lianne Rubbo followed by asking whether the proposed widening would result in the loss of any on-street parking.
 - 1. Melinda Bowker noted that there is currently no designated on-street parking in this area, though cars occasionally stop illegally along the curb. She confirmed that no official parking spaces would be removed.
- C. Greg Madonna raised a question about the potential to reintroduce a bike lane in at least one direction through the Downtown section.
 - 1. Melinda explained that a bike lane was initially included in the earlier Corradino Group design concept. Still, it was ultimately removed at the request of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and then-Commissioner Sorensen during the 2021 adoption process. She emphasized that the DFLCA had been vocal in supporting the inclusion of a bike lane at the time and expressed continued disappointment that it was excluded.
- D. Greg asked why the lane was removed if there had been community support for it.
 - 1. Melinda reiterated that it was a directive from the Commission and DDA rather than a technical or design-based decision.
 - 2. Milos Majstorovic confirmed that the current scope of work is to advance the vision formally adopted by the City Commission in 2021, meaning

WSP and the design team are implementing what was already approved rather than revisiting policy-level decisions.

E. Bill Ott asked whether the raised intersection proposed at SE 1st Avenue was primarily a safety feature or an aesthetic element.

1. Catherine explained that raised intersections serve multiple functions—they increase pedestrian visibility, slow vehicle speeds at crossings, and contribute to traffic calming. She added that a nearby signal had recently been removed and replaced with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), making the raised intersection an effective complementary feature.

Melinda summarized to the group that WSP is not redesigning the corridor but is executing the approved vision, with refinements that improve safety and the pedestrian experience within the adopted framework.

III. Shops Section (SE 6th Avenue to SE 9th Avenue)

Two design alternatives were presented for this mixed-use retail stretch of the corridor.

A. Alternative 1 – No Median

1. Removes the existing median.
2. Reallocates space to wider sidewalks (up to 10 feet) and expanded landscaping.
3. Maintains permanent on-street parking on both sides.
4. Adds raised mid-block crossings, curb extensions, and pedestrian lighting.
5. Provides approximately two times the tree canopy than the existing.

B. Alternative 2 - With Median

1. Retains the existing median but alternates on-street parking between block sides.
2. Maintains raised mid-block crossings and curb extensions.
3. Provides approximately twice the tree canopy than the existing.

Estimated Construction Cost: ≈ \$7.5 million (*Excludes CEI and wayfinding costs.*)

IV. Q&A – Shops Section

Questions for this segment focused primarily on parking configuration, median options, and economic implications.

A. Bill Ott initiated the discussion by asking whether it might make more sense to remove all on-street parking in the Shops section, rather than alternating or retaining it. He expressed concern that parallel parking creates congestion, especially when drivers unfamiliar with the area stop to maneuver into tight spaces.

B. Lianne Rubbo agreed, noting that the nearby parking garages can easily accommodate visitors and employees. She added that on-street spaces often cause traffic bottlenecks, particularly along the narrower portions of Las Olas Blvd where delivery trucks and turning vehicles compete for space.

C. Melinda Bowker remarked that she expects the primary community debate will center around whether to retain the median or not, rather than around eliminating parking. Many stakeholders view the median as part of Las Olas's identity and an important visual and safety buffer between the two directions of traffic.

D. Milos Majstorovic emphasized the financial implications of removing on-street parking, explaining that parking along the Western Corridor generates roughly \$2 million annually in revenue for the City, accounting for parking fees and citations combined. He noted that this corridor is among the City's highest-revenue-generating parking areas and stressed the need to balance community desires with fiscal responsibility.

E. Bill Ott asked whether the City was charging higher rates for on-street spaces compared to garages, suggesting that revenue loss might be less significant if rates were adjusted.

1. Milos responded that the pricing is similar across parking types, but on-street spaces tend to turn over more frequently, making them more profitable on a per-hour basis due to convenience.

F. Greg Madonna asked whether lighting upgrades were included in the design.

1. Catherine confirmed that pedestrian lighting would be updated throughout the corridor, and the design team is considering a gaslight-style

fixture to align with the community's preference for a traditional aesthetic, while vehicular lighting would be modernized for consistency and safety.

G. Melinda also recalled that during earlier outreach, the group had discussed removing all on-street parking between SE 3rd Avenue and the Tunnel Top, but the City had opted to retain those spaces in the current plan.

1. Catherine confirmed that the design does not remove existing parking in that area and that sidewalks around the Tunnel Top are not being modified as part of this phase.

H. Finally, Bill Ott asked whether the entire plan represents a continuation of previous work or a new effort.

1. Milos reiterated that it is a continuation of the 2021 adopted vision and that WSP's current task is to translate that vision into construction-ready documents.

Throughout the discussion, the board expressed appreciation for the level of detail shared and acknowledged that the updated design reflects meaningful progress toward improving walkability, shade, and safety—while still needing further community input on tradeoffs related to parking and medians.

V. Additional Streetscape Elements

A. Lighting: Pedestrian-scale fixtures with a traditional *gaslight-style* look per community feedback; updated vehicle lighting for consistency.

B. Seating: Precast concrete benches with customizable design.

C. Stormwater: Design meets the City's Level of Service standard for a 10-year, 24-hour storm event.

VI. Next Steps

A. Public Town Hall: Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 6:00 PM at FAU Metro Lab, 111 E Las Olas Blvd.

B. City Commission Presentation: December 16, 2025 — final direction on preliminary design.

C. Final Design Completion: Targeted for 2026 following Commission guidance.

Wrap Up

The DFLCA board expressed appreciation for the detailed presentation and asked informed questions regarding design intent, public safety, tree canopy, bike infrastructure, and parking revenue. The discussion reflected strong community interest in balancing walkability, aesthetics, and accessibility.