



## North Roosevelt Boulevard Reconstruction Project

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **How did this project get started, and why will it take so long?**

This project, and all its associated revisions and permits, has taken over 10 years to develop. The original design estimate, including the utilities (water, wastewater, stormwater, etc.) was about 1,200 days, which, with holidays and rain days, etc., would be nearly 3½ years. The project plans and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) concept were presented to the City of Key West, the City Commission and the Key West Chamber of Commerce for review, and during the design process there were three public input meetings. FDOT was asked to reduce the project time so that three tourist seasons were not impacted, and not to begin construction until the conclusion of the January-through-March tourist season in 2012.

The current project design and MOT concept was presented to City of Key West staff, the Key West City Commission and the Key West Chamber of Commerce, and was accepted. The revisions included the 'major element' concept, which gives the contractor more leeway to complete construction sooner by allowing him to proceed into the next sequence of the project when one of four major elements has reached a sequence limit. The major elements are sewer lines, water lines, drainage lines and seawall. Since the goal is to complete the project without affecting three tourist seasons, this concept keeps the contractor working instead of starting, stopping, and starting again. This reduced the construction time estimate to 820 days, affecting only two tourist seasons.

Also, former City Manager Jim Scholl asked if an incentive clause could be included. FDOT added the first clause of its kind Statewide in over two years to this contract—a \$10,000-per-day incentive for each day the project is completed before the project estimate, up to a total incentive of \$1.2 million. The contractor would earn the entire incentive if the project is completed in 700 days (plus hurricane impacts, if any), which is less than two years and would affect only two tourist seasons. A disincentive clause of \$10,000 per day in addition to liquidated damages of \$6,762.05 per day goes into effect for each day the project goes past the 820 day limit (plus holidays and weather days). The new project scope was put out for bids, and the contract was awarded to the deMoya Group with construction beginning on April 23, 2012, with an anticipated conclusion in August of 2014.

### **What kind of work is being done?**

The North Roosevelt Boulevard project includes:

- reconstruction of North Roosevelt Boulevard
- replacing the seawall and promenade
- installing a new drainage system
- replacing traffic signals with hurricane resistant signals
- installing a new traffic signal at Searstown
- installing new street lights
- installing new landscaping
- installing new sidewalks
- replacing water lines in coordination with the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, and
- replacing sewer lines in coordination with the City of Key West
- maintaining entrances to nearly 170 businesses along the construction corridor

There are many challenges to this project, including:

- crews that are based three hours or more away
- high tides and saltwater intrusion into the work area
- frequent rains
- blackout dates
- limited work area
- providing access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- contaminated soil areas that require a specialty contractor

### **Why aren't they finishing one section at a time instead of tearing up the entire road?**

The main reason is that it would add at least a year to the duration of the project as well as substantial additional costs. There are many different construction issues involved. For example, the contractor would have to completely dig up the road, complete all of the items listed in the earlier answer, pave, restripe, etc., and then move on to the next section. With moving continuously from one section to the next, the contractor can continue work on the sewer lines, for example, while additional crews are working on the water lines behind them, and then the seawall crews can follow along and begin their work.

Also, if the contractor had to totally complete a section before moving on, the contractor would have to release the sewer crew while all the other work was completed, then release the those crews , etc., who would then leave the project and be assigned to other projects. This is not an effective construction method and would add considerable time and costs to the project. The current concept is the most expeditious way to complete the project on time, and very possibly ahead of schedule.

### **Why isn't there more work going on simultaneously?**

There is actually a great deal of work going on simultaneously. As of this writing, sewer lines, water lines, drainage lines, signal modifications, and clearing material from the roadway is or has occurred. In the near future, once the underground crews are sufficiently ahead, the seawall crew will begin its work. More crews will be added as work progresses.

The incentive is in the contract for completing the work early. The decision to put more crews to work rests with the contractor. As long as the contractor is on his approved schedule he is fulfilling the requirements of the contract.

The contractor bid on this project and the bid was accepted. Like any business, the Contractor has to make a profit to stay in business. The contractor estimates what the job will take to complete prior to the bid. The Department is not involved in this long bidding process. The Contractor estimates how many crews he can have based on many factors. There is only so much work that can go on at any one time due to limitations of space for both workers and equipment, and the prescribed and logical order during the construction process. In addition, the contractor must store equipment and materials on the construction site, as no other vacant land was available for a staging area close enough to project.

### **Why aren't they working 24/7?**

The approved contract does not require 24/7 work. The project was not advertised or bid as a 24/7 project, therefore the additional costs for working 24/7 are not included in the contract. The majority of the subcontractors on the project are currently working a five-day or more work week. One subcontractor works a four-day-work week but puts in a 50-hour week. The main contractor—the De Moya Group—is working 65 hours a week. The contamination contractor is working a six-day, 60-hour week. The contractor has the option to add crews to work more hours. However, there are external lighting and safety issues to consider, as well as noise and light impacts on hotels, businesses and homes in the vicinity. Ultimately, the contractor is bound by contract to complete the work in the time specified.

### **Are they hiring local workers?**

The contractor is required to hire at least 12 trainees for the project. The best way to accomplish this is to hire from the local community during the life of the contract. If insufficient qualified trainees are available locally other sources will be utilized. Anyone wishing to qualify as a trainee may apply at the construction office and may download employment information and an application from the project website at [www.fdotmonroe.com/keywest](http://www.fdotmonroe.com/keywest), or may pick one up in person at the construction office at 3142 Boog Powell Court, Key West.

**Why can't it be one lane in each direction on North Roosevelt Boulevard?**

Maintaining one lane in each direction was evaluated but considered by all involved to be impractical because anyone making a left turn across the on-coming lane would seriously back up traffic causing severe delays with no alternative routes for getting around the congestion.

**Why is traffic one lane in each direction between First Street and Eisenhower?**

Two-way traffic was maintained in this stretch of North Roosevelt Boulevard to accommodate required emergency response times of the police and fire facilities located there.

**Why did they start at the Eisenhower end?**

The project was designed and accepted as a water-side phase and a business-side phase with three sequences—Eisenhower to First Street, First Street to Kennedy, and Kennedy to the triangle at US 1. In addition, it was necessary to complete utility work first in the section of Truman Avenue between Eisenhower and George streets. Since Eisenhower to First Street was the shortest span of the sequences, beginning there was the logical starting point—to make sure the detours and lane changes would work as planned—before moving on to a much-longer stretch of the roadway. A single lane shift at the beginning was the least confusing and safest concept.

**Is there any money to help local businesses?**

FDOT does not have funding resources available for businesses with access that is maintained during construction. There may be, however, SBA low-interest loans available for businesses. Those questions should be addressed with the local Small Business Administration. This public project will ultimately help everyone and is being constructed as quickly as possible.

**Why aren't there more signs before the triangle to show that two lanes can exit to the right onto US 1?**

There is currently one sign and several arrows on the roadway, and a sign next to the overhead traffic signal indicating the allowed movements. The lack of a median on South Roosevelt Boulevard approaching the triangle, combined with a very small sidewalk area, does not provide enough room for additional effective signage. This issue is discussed on the radio frequently to get the word out.

**Why didn't they make it two lanes outbound on North Roosevelt Boulevard instead of two lanes inbound?**

The decision was made to for the current traffic flow, which is one continuous unimpeded lane inbound onto North Roosevelt Boulevard and one continuous

unimpeded lane outbound from South Roosevelt Boulevard, besides the other inbound and outbound lanes that are governed by traffic signals. Outbound-only lanes on North Roosevelt would have meant all incoming traffic would be funneled onto South Roosevelt Boulevard and would be governed by a traffic light. By keeping the traffic inbound on North Roosevelt Boulevard, the unimpeded flow of traffic into and out of the island is maintained, thus reducing delays.

**Why can't they have two lanes inbound in the morning, and two lanes outbound in the afternoon?**

Besides the disruption of the 'continuous unimpeded' flow of traffic discussed above, changing the lanes twice a day would be very confusing to drivers, especially to those visiting the island or those who don't use North Roosevelt that often. Please remember the adjustment periods required with each lane change made to date. In addition, changing hundreds of directional signs twice a day, and the directional arrows and markings on the roadways, is just not possible or practical.

**Why don't they remove the entire triangle section so two lanes can turn easier onto northbound US 1?**

In a word, safety. Removing the island, which is a pedestrian refuge, would require the pedestrian signal to be moved to the south of the island (on the curve) and a temporary traffic signal to be installed to stop traffic for pedestrians. When activated, this would completely stop traffic exiting Key West from South Roosevelt Boulevard, causing delays, particularly at the evening rush hour. Signage showing the second right turn lane has been installed, the roadway is now striped to show this turn, and the public has started to use it in its present configuration, which is a better solution. With the removal of the outer corner of the triangle, traffic may now turn right from the through lane without safety impacts to pedestrian/bicyclist traffic.

**How will people know how to get to my business?**

SWC, the communications consultant for this project, has developed a visitor fact sheet/business locator map/brochure which identifies all the businesses on the North Roosevelt corridor by type and location. It also shows the easiest routes to get back to the business districts on North Roosevelt from other locations in the City. 20,000 of these maps are being provided to tourist-related businesses such as hotels, guest houses and rental car agencies. Also, these visitor fact sheet/business locator maps are being provided electronically to businesses that can then email them to customers, and the maps are also available for download from the project website [www.fdotmonroe.com/keywest](http://www.fdotmonroe.com/keywest).

**The business across the street has a sign; why can't I have one?**

Businesses that are on the opposite side of the roadway construction are not provided with a sign by FDOT. If traffic must drive through an opening in the construction barricades, FDOT provides a sign to identify the entrance to that business.

## **PREVIOUS QUESTIONS/COMMENTS AND THEIR RESOLUTIONS**

### **We don't want the safety railing on North Roosevelt Boulevard.**

The aluminum safety railing was in the original plans that were approved by the City of Key West and bid on by the contractor. The process for change worked exactly as it should. When residents expressed concerns about the effect on the view, the City asked FDOT to present alternatives. FDOT presented nine alternatives that would still meet the FDOT safety and liability requirements, and their associated costs. The list was narrowed to three, and the 9-inch high by 24-inch wide concrete cap was selected and will be implemented. This was a textbook example of how the combined efforts of local officials and FDOT developed a solution that addressed residents' concerns.

### **Traffic is backing up tremendously on Flagler Avenue at South Roosevelt, and on South Roosevelt at the triangle.**

The two left turns from Flagler Avenue onto South Roosevelt Boulevard were not in the original plans, and therefore had to be reconfigured and approved before being put in place. Not only has the triangle been reconfigured to accommodate two lanes exiting the city onto US 1, but the deteriorated condition of the roadway leading up to the triangle was partially repaved, making a safer exit. These improvements were a direct result of input received at public information meetings.

### **Traffic is backing up everywhere.**

Besides the two left turns from Flagler Avenue onto South Roosevelt Boulevard, and the two right turn exit lanes at the triangle onto US 1, FDOT has installed 16 cameras at various intersections throughout the City and can view all of them simultaneously, if needed, to monitor traffic flow and make recommendations for signal timing changes. When a timing adjustment is warranted, a simulation is run which allows engineers to see what effect the change might have on other intersections throughout the City. Many changes have already been made which have lessened congestion. Signal timing is a continuing process.

### **What about traffic at the schools?**

The project's communication consultant coordinated a meeting with the City, the School District and FDOT to plan how to improve traffic at the start of School in Key West given the additional effects of FDOT and City roadway construction. This was the first time such a coordination meeting had ever happened, and it resulted in productive measures and agreements for implementation.

**What arrangements have been made for Fantasy Fest and other events?**

All upcoming events are being studied for any specific requirements that may be needed. For example, FDOT has had several meetings with the City manager, other City officials, Fantasy Fest organizers and the City of Key West Police Department to discuss traffic issues during major events, specifically Fantasy Fest.

Dynamic message signs from the City and the contractor were used to let drivers know of preferred routes when coming into and leaving the City. A map was created by FDOT's communication consultant showing the preferred routes for parade floats to use when coming to the staging area for the parade. This map was distributed to all entrants in the parade.

A police officer was stationed at the North Roosevelt Boulevard/Palm Avenue intersection on Saturday, October 27, from noon until 7 pm, to assist with any traffic issues that may arise. In addition, the City provided 22 police officers that were stationed at known 'pinch points' throughout the City to help direct traffic out of the festival area after the parade Saturday night, and as a result, there were no reports of any additional traffic backups or difficulties in the City of Key West.

**What if I have other questions?**

For any comments or additional questions, please contact Public Information Specialist, Dean Walters at 305-849-1474, or via email at [dean@swcinc.net](mailto:dean@swcinc.net)