

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 6, 2021

From: Commissioner Costa Vatikiotis

To: Mayor and Board of Commissioners

Subject: Additional Tasking for Kimley-Horn and the Disston Avenue Corridor Study

I wish to propose additional tasking for Kimley-Horn as part of the Disston Avenue Corridor Study. The new tasking would focus on traffic management improvements for Alternate US Highway 19 (Alt 19) between E. Curlew Place and Tarpon Avenue with emphasis on the intersections of Alt 19 (S. Pinellas Ave) with Meres Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

Manatee Village Shopping Center (MVSC) was built in 1989. At that time, S. Pinellas Avenue traffic was stable, even with the shopping center occupied. Since about 2000 to 2010, the shopping center became lightly occupied. Nevertheless, traffic on S. Pinellas Avenue has continued to increase from other growth with the latest impact coming from the new Icaria Apartments. The traffic is at times severely bottle necked. We now know that MVSC is going to be completely rehabbed with a commensurate increase in occupancy and traffic. Based on representations by Ash Properties, the “footprint” of the shopping center will remain as it is. As such, there is no requirement for studies or subsequent traffic improvements that will be required of Ash Properties unless it chooses to reconfigure the driveway accesses from Alt 19, Meres Blvd, or E. Morgan St.

Consequently, I believe it would be smart to try and get ahead in the planning for the anticipated additional traffic impact. I would like to pursue an addition or change order for Kimley-Horn to the Phase II portion of the Disston Avenue Corridor Study. Specifically, it would take a close look at the stretch of S. Pinellas Avenue between Tarpon Avenue and E. Curlew Place for any potential traffic management enhancements/improvements. We would use that information to work with Forward Pinellas for improving the traffic flow along S. Pinellas Avenue. To the best of my knowledge, there is currently nothing in FDOT’s 5-year plan for improving US Alt 19 or US Hwy 19 within the city limits.

For information, the City has declined past FDOT overtures to traffic improvements on US Highway 19 (US Hwy 19) and Alt 19. An overpass at the intersection of Tarpon Avenue and US Hwy 19 has been declined twice and overtures to removing the traffic lights at Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Lemon Street, and Orange Street were successfully argued against, as well. So, my sense is that if we wish to control what happens within Tarpon Springs regarding traffic, the City will have to take the lead, hopefully with grant assistance from Forward Pinellas and their Complete Streets Program.

I believe the first step would be to obtain Commission approval on the need of additional tasking as described above. The second step would be for Kimley-Horn to formally bring the new tasking forward at the appropriate time as an addition or a change order to the Phase II Disston Avenue Corridor Study and contract. I do not know whether we can work this into the

existing grant funding or additional funding would be needed that the City would have to provide. Obviously, that would be up to the City Manager and Planning Director Vincent to determine.

Thank you.