

# Memorandum



**Date:** September 21, 2016  
**To:** Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners  
**From:** Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor  
**Subject:** Report on the Cost and Feasibility of Installing Sidewalks along the West Side of  
NW 57 Avenue – Directive #150204

Agenda Item No. 2(B)5  
October 5, 2016



At the March 17, 2015 Board of County Commissioners (Board) meeting, the Board approved Resolution No. R-259-15 sponsored by Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan directing the Miami-Dade County (County) Mayor or his designee to prepare and submit a report regarding the cost and feasibility of installing a sidewalk along the west side of NW 57 Avenue from NW 173 Street to NW 183 Street, or connecting existing private sidewalks in the area (Attachment 1). The Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW), as the agency in charge of construction and maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure in the County, has been tasked with the preparation of this report.

## Site Evaluation

The site was inspected by DTPW staff to determine the feasibility and cost of installing new sidewalks. The evaluation consisted of a field survey establishing the path of the proposed sidewalk, assessing the type and extent of the required improvements, and developing a proposal for the construction of sidewalk improvements that would address the identified deficiency. Additionally, DTPW staff met with Mr. Richard Browning, a Social Studies and Law Academy Lead teacher, who initiated this request on behalf of students from American Senior High School, and with Larry Gardner from Commission District 1 to discuss the findings of the evaluation.

## Sidewalk Standards

The construction of sidewalks along this segment of NW 57 Avenue must comply with the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Design Standards and the Americans with Disabilities Act's Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (ADA PROWAG). As per these standards, sidewalks must have a minimum width of five (5) feet, a longitudinal slope no greater than five (5) percent, and a maximum cross slope of two (2) percent. Pedestrian ramps must have a maximum running slope of 8.3 percent, a cross slope no greater than two (2) percent, a landing area with a minimum width of 48 inches, and a detectable warning surface to act as a cue to cross the street. Sidewalks need to be located a minimum of five (5) feet away from the edge of pavement, with sidewalks that are closer than five (5) feet to the edge of pavement, requiring curb and gutter installed between the roadway and the front edge of the sidewalk.

## Existing Conditions

The area west of NW 57 Avenue is commercial land, while the area east of NW 57 Avenue is predominantly a single-family residential neighborhood, with the International Bible Baptist Church located at 17701 NW 57 Avenue. The entire east side of NW 57 Avenue has existing sidewalks in place. The NW 57 Avenue Canal is located just west of this roadway.

As indicated in the resolution, NW 57 Avenue is a State maintained roadway (SR 823). The majority of roadways intersecting SR 823 are maintained by the County, with the exception of NW 183 Street (SR 860), which is also under the jurisdictional responsibility of FDOT. There are approximately 3,100

linear feet of frontage along the east side of the right-of-way along this segment of roadway that could receive new sidewalks. However, there are stretches where there is insufficient space for the installation of sidewalks, specifically along the 220 linear foot right turn bay located north of the entrance to the shopping center on the west (theoretical NW 181 Terrace), along the 355 linear foot right turn bay located north of the intersection of NW 178 Street and the 340 linear foot right turn bay located north of the intersection of NW 176 Street. In the segments of the west side of the roadway where there is enough space, there are physical restrictions such as light poles, retaining walls, and guardrails that would need to be addressed prior to the installation of the proposed sidewalks (Attachment 2). The construction of a retaining wall and a handrail or fence, as well as the relocation of the existing guardrail, would be required due to the proximity of the proposed sidewalk to the slope of the canal.

#### **Connecting to Existing Sidewalks on Private Property**

As an alternative, DTPW evaluated the construction of a public sidewalk connecting the existing private sidewalks located on the west side of the County canal along the same segment of NW 57 Avenue, from NW 173 Drive to NW 183 Street. These private sidewalks were built at the time of development to provide access to the properties, only connecting to public sidewalks at NW 173 Drive west of NW 57 Avenue (Attachment 3). The sidewalks along NW 176 Street west of NW 57 Avenue are not connected to private sidewalks, as connecting to the public sidewalks along NW 176 Street would require installing sidewalks on private property; therefore, there are no pedestrian paths to the north or south of this street (Attachment 4).

It is important to note that the other location where private sidewalks connect to sidewalks facing a roadway is along NW 177 Street west of NW 57 Avenue (Attachment 5); however, NW 177 Street is a private roadway and, therefore, is not under the jurisdictional maintenance of the County.

A summary of this alternative indicates that the segments which have no sidewalk continuity on the west side of the canal are as follows (Attachment 6):

- Approximately 1000 feet from NW 183 Street south to theoretical NW 179 Terrace;
- Approximately 175 feet immediately north of NW 176 Terrace; and
- Approximately 195 feet immediately south of NW 176 Street.

Furthermore, an examination of the NW 57 Avenue Canal indicates that its right-of-way is 65 feet in width. As such, the close proximity to the water's edge renders the west canal bank too narrow for the installation of sidewalks (Attachment 7).

#### **Estimated Cost of Improvements**

The cost for installing sidewalks along the west side of NW 57 Avenue, using the average unit prices of current County sidewalk contracts, is \$450,000.00. The cost estimate for the alternative of installing a public sidewalk interconnecting existing private sidewalks located on the west side of the County canal on the private lots that face the canal is \$67,000.00, and includes the installation of a chain link fence next to the proposed sidewalks (Attachment 8).

#### **Funding Sources**

Since NW 57 Avenue is under FDOT's jurisdiction, County funding sources could not be used for the installation of sidewalks without an agreement between both parties. Additionally, public funds could not be used for pedestrian facilities within private property. As such, the affected property owners would need to be willing to provide access to the back of their properties for pedestrian traffic and to

fund the cost of the proposed improvements. They would also be liable for potential accidents that could occur within the limits of their property.

**Feasibility and Recommendations**

Given the lack of physical space along NW 57 Avenue, the continuity of pedestrian facilities cannot be achieved without significantly modifying existing conditions, meaning a turning lane would have to be taken, which would impact the flow of vehicular southbound traffic. Additionally, the use of the west canal bank to connect with the existing private pathways is not viable due to the lack of sufficient right-of-way to construct pedestrian facilities. As such, the interconnecting sidewalks would have to be installed on the back of the private lots facing the canal.

As an alternative, it has been recommended to FDOT that the existing sidewalks located along the east side of NW 57 Avenue be improved to eliminate cracks, vertical separations, or physical barriers in order to facilitate pedestrian traffic along this segment of roadway. This existing pedestrian facility provides an accessible path from north of NW 183 Street and from south of NW 167 Street to the church and single-family homes located on the east side of NW 57 Avenue. The existing pedestrian signals and crosswalks at the intersection of NW 176 Street and NW 57 Avenue link the shopping centers on the west side to the sidewalks on the east side of the road. However, NW 173 Drive does not have pedestrian signals nor detectable warning surfaces on the Northwest, Southwest and Southeast corners of the intersection to allow pedestrians access into the shopping malls to the west of the roadway. FDOT has informed DTPW that it will be repairing the sidewalk along the east side of NW 57 Avenue as part of a construction project that is scheduled to begin in November of 2016. The project is expected to be completed by June of 2017. As part of this project, FDOT will also be installing detectable warning surfaces on all corners of the NW 173 Drive intersection, as well as pedestrian signals.

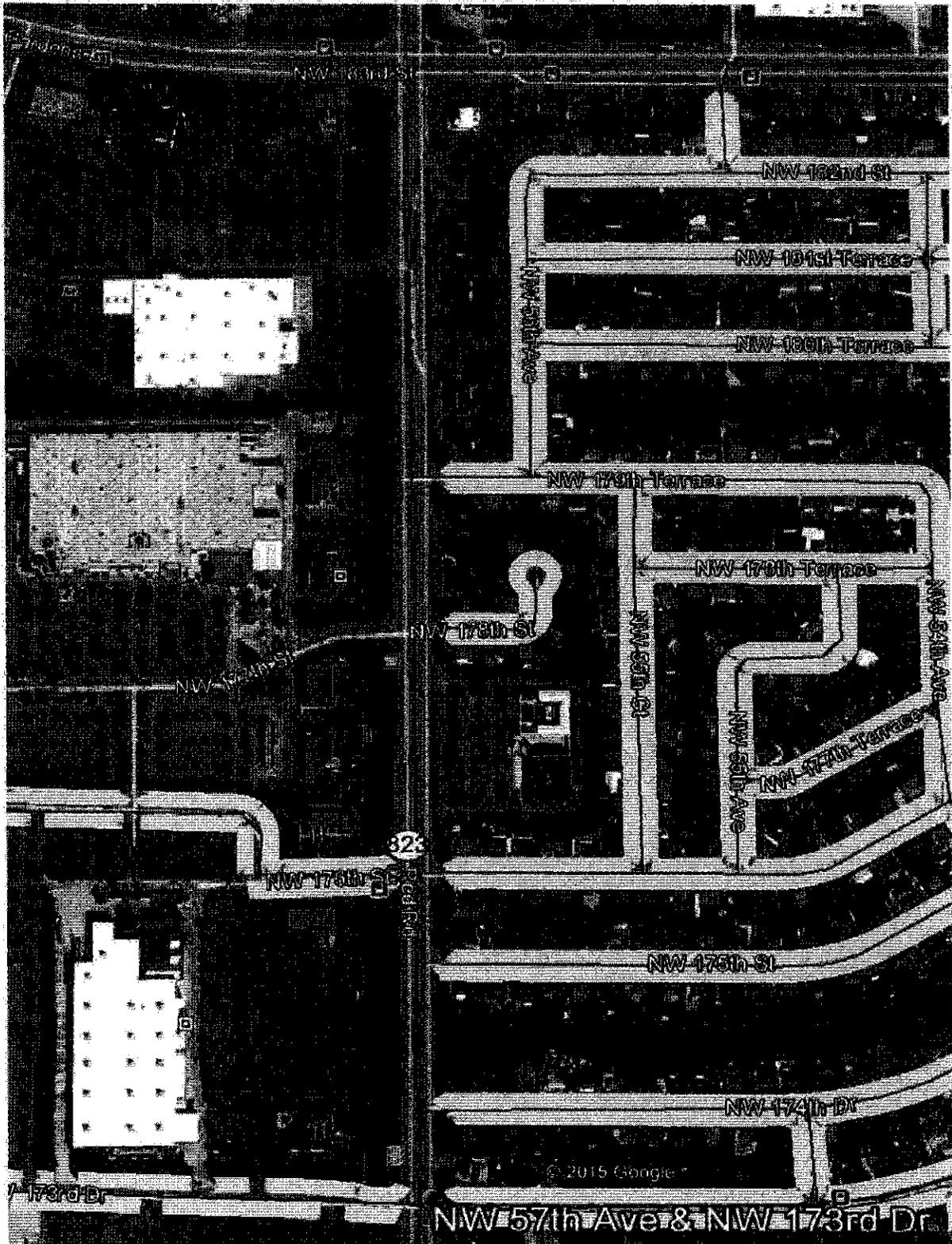
Per Ordinance 14-65, this memorandum will be placed on the next available Board of County Commissioners meeting agenda.

If additional information is needed, please contact Alice Bravo, P.E., Director of the DTPW, at (786) 469-5406.

**Attachments**

- c: Alina T. Hudak, Deputy Mayor, Office of the Mayor
- Alice N. Bravo, P.E., Director, Department of Transportation and Public Works
- Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator

# ATTACHMENT 1



## ATTACHMENT 2



Physical Restrictions – Headwall and Guardrail



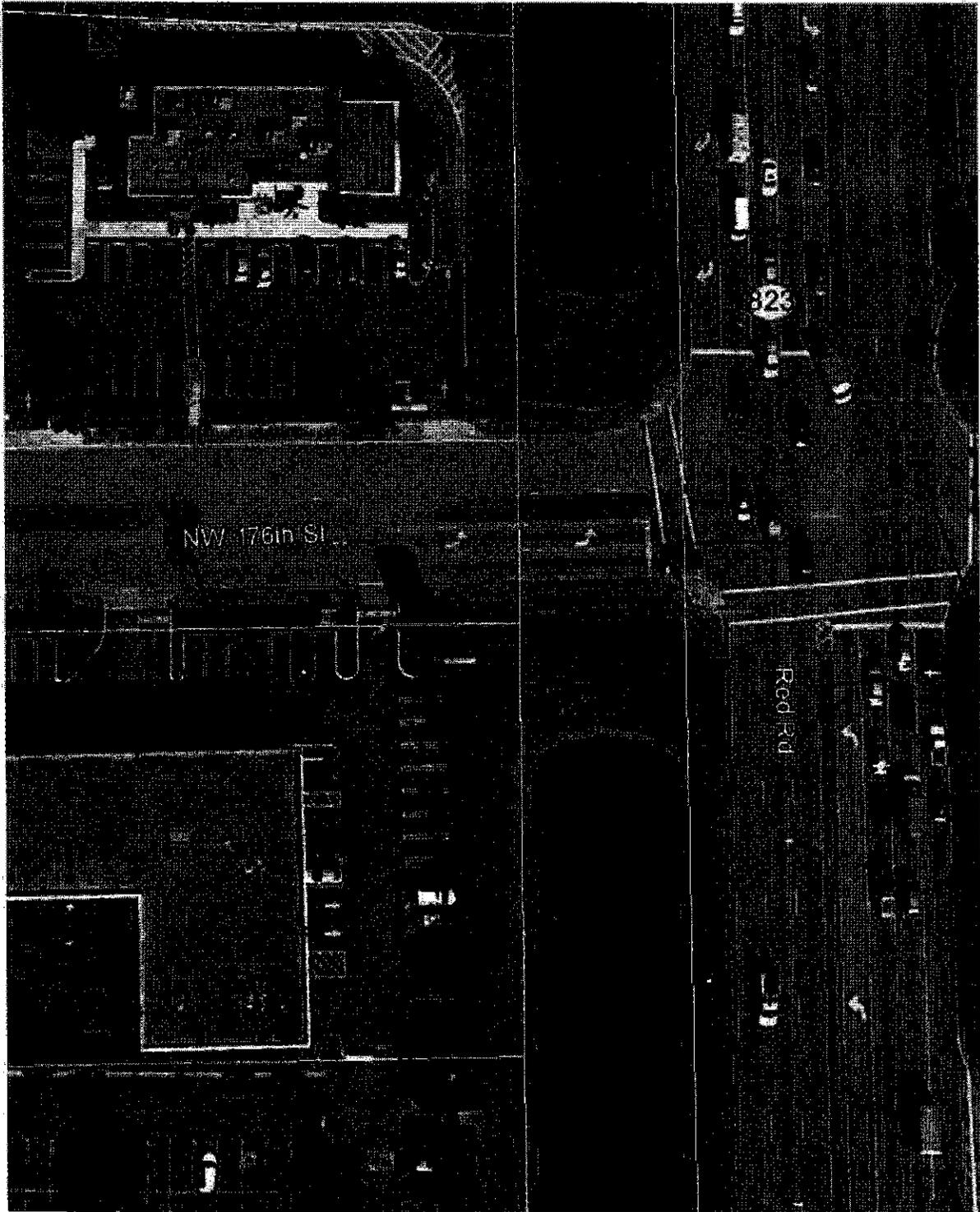
Physical Restrictions – Headwall and Guardrail

# ATTACHMENT 3



Private-public sidewalk connection - NW 173 Drive

# ATTACHMENT 4



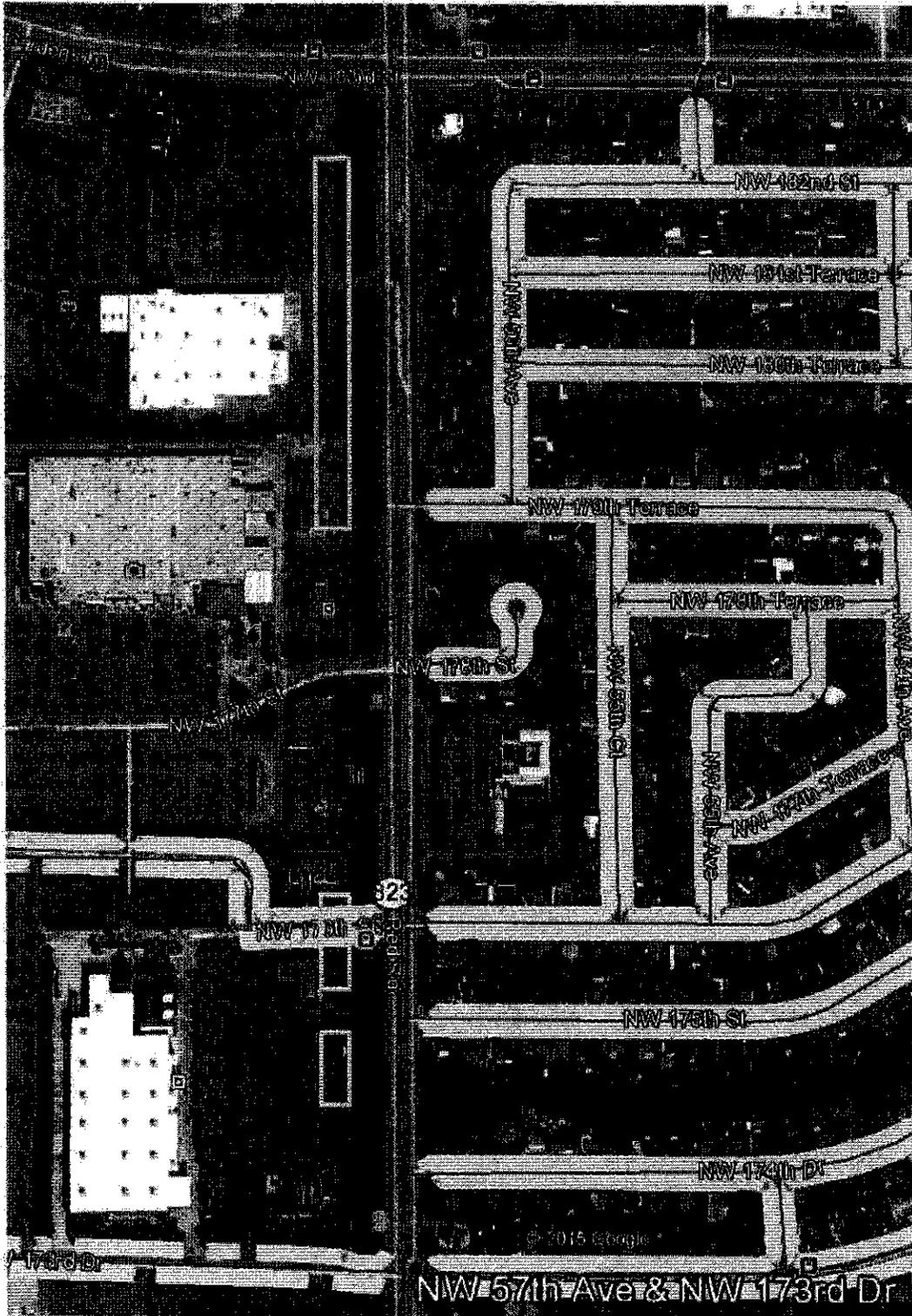
No private-public sidewalk connection – NW 176 Street.

# ATTACHMENT 5



Private sidewalks and private roadway

# ATTACHMENT 6



Segments with no private sidewalks

# ATTACHMENT 7



Narrow top of canal bank (white line east of canal)

## ATTACHMENT 8



Private sidewalks and fence next to canal



Private sidewalks and fence next to canal