



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 6686, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Report and Discussion Regarding Tree Maintenance along the County portion of Rockledge Drive. - District 2.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Dept/Office:

Public Works Department

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners receive staff report and public comment regarding tree maintenance on portions of Rockledge Drive.

Summary Explanation and Background:

Over the past several years there have been a number of meetings between County staff and various residents living along Rockledge Drive to discuss and disclose concerns regarding tree-related obstructions on that transportation corridor. The staff concerns have been primarily focused on improving safety by bringing the road into compliance with Federal, State, and County standards relating to roadway clearance for vehicles traveling along the road. Citizen concerns have mainly been associated with preserving the character of the road corridor.

Most recently, staff has performed surveys, tree surveys, tree condition evaluations, and performed an engineering evaluation of the situation and has determined that in conformance with applicable standards, the tree maintenance needed can be reduced from 16 ft. to 14 ft. of vertical clearance. The result of this analysis is that of the over 1,000 trees in close proximity to the road, as much as 25 feet away, just 61 (less than 6%) require any trimming. No tree requires complete removal; however, 15 trees (less than 1.5%) require severe trimming (referred to as major ++ trimming). All 61 of the trees to be trimmed are in fair to poor condition and most have been struck by vehicles. All trimming is limited to portions of trees that are both lower than 14 feet and are overhanging the road pavement.

In addition to concerns addressed by the information above, there have been numerous other questions and concerns raised by residents, some of which are addressed below.

Rockledge Drive is a public road under the jurisdiction of the County by virtue of deed, plat, or maintenance. The County is responsible for meeting the minimum traffic and safety standards. Section 856-69, Brevard County Code, specifies that road and easement improvements shall comply with the applicable regulations of the County and State, including, but not limited to, Florida Department of Transportation (F.D.O.T.) standards and specifications and exhibits approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Florida Legislature authorized the F.D.O.T. to establish standards and criteria for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of public roads and streets. Sections 334.044(10) and 336.045, Florida Statutes.

The F.D.O.T. Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways (2018) (also known as the "Florida Greenbook") Paragraph C.7.j.4.(b) specifies the vertical clearance height on certain roads shall be sixteen feet unless there is an engineering analysis which safely lowers it (14 feet minimum). Furthermore, the F.D.O.T. also has in place the F.D.O.T. Design Manual that establishes certain vertical clearance requirements. Specifically, Paragraph 122.5.9.1 of the F.D.O.T. Design Manual incorporates the national design standards from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (A.A.S.H.T.O.) and provides similar requirements to that of the Florida Greenbook.

Pursuant to Section 336.045, Florida Statutes, F.D.O.T. provides uniform minimum standards for design, construction, and maintenance that apply to the County-road system. Public Works staff has determined Rockledge Drive falls within that system.

Supporting the justification to reduce the impact and to preserve the road character to the greatest degree possible, two arborists independently evaluated the trees. Staff prepared a report titled the Traffic Operations Rockledge Drive Technical Memorandum. The limits identified in the Traffic Operations Rockledge Drive Technical Memorandum establish the lowest height clearance allowable under Federal and State Standards as 14 feet (rather than 16 feet). This is to ensure that the character and nature of Rockledge Drive are preserved to the greatest extent possible, while allowing for appropriate traffic safety.

Clerk to the Board Instructions: