
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date: September 20, 2007
To: St. Charles Parish
From: Alison Catarella-Michel, P.E., P.T.O.E.
Re: Ormond Boulevard Corridor Analysis

1.1 Highway 61 (Airline Highway) at Ormond Boulevard

Urban Systems Recommendations: To provide an additional left turn lane on Airline Highway eastbound and modify the signal timing.
OCA Comments: This will add to the amount of traffic turning onto Ormond Boulevard at one time and may cause vehicle queues when they attempt to merge.
Response: This needs to be addressed with the geometry in that area. The additional storage of the left turn lane will decrease delay and improve safety by reducing queuing on the through lane of Airline Highway. It also will lessen the time used for the left turn phase allowing extra time for other movements.

1.2 Section of Ormond Boulevard between Airline Highway and Rail Road Tracks

Urban Systems Recommendations: A proposed alternative to the geometric conditions in the area was developed that closes median openings and eliminates left turns, see Figure 6.
OCA Comments: 1. Northbound traffic trying to turn left into McDonalds/CVS now only have one entrance and no storage lane. This may cause traffic to queue and block one of the through lanes.
2. Future development in the area may add additional traffic to this area that the configuration may not be able to service.
3. The OCA would like to see the improvements to the section of Ormond Boulevard between Airline Highway and the railroad tracks moved up the priority list from number 5 to at least number 3.
Response: 1. Room for a storage lane is available for this turning movement however it will only be able to store a few cars. The gaps in traffic caused by the signal should provide enough opportunity for cars to turn safely. Eliminating the median cuts reduces the conflict points which improve safety.

2. While there is available land for future developments in the vicinity, there is a R.O.W. issue with this section of Ormond Boulevard. Therefore, increasing the width for additional travel lanes will not occur. However, the Planning Commission has some control over the approval of building permits as future developments begin their approval process. At that time ingress/egress patterns can be established and alternative access such as Airline Highway can be required.
3. Parish will make the final decision about moving the geometric improvements for this section of roadway up in priority.

1.3 Ormond Boulevard at Stanton Hall Drive

Urban Systems Recommendations: It is recommended that the untrimmed bushes be removed because they block the view of turning vehicles. Operationally, the recommendations were split into two phases. Phase One: to install a left turn lane on the Ormond Boulevard southbound approach. Phase Two: to monitor the intersection and if needed install a traffic signal and re-stripe Stanton Hall Drive to provide exclusive left and right turn lanes.

OCA Comments: 1. Other measures may be taken to prevent drivers from using the bike path to go around turning vehicles, such as vertical channelizers being installed.
2. With the addition of the left turn lane, U-turns should be prohibited due to lack of turning space. Physical objects should be investigated to deter drivers from attempting to u-turn such as a barrier curb on the northeast corner so the driver will not pass through the lawn to u-turn.
3. The left turn lane may make it more difficult to turn left out of Stanton Hall Drive.
4. The bushes have been removed from the median but there are crepe myrtles that cause a maintenance problem because they need to be trimmed occasionally to prevent them from becoming a sight obstruction.

Responses: 1. This causes a problem with who is going to maintain the objects. It was agreed that vertical channelizers would regularly get ran over and would need replacing.
2. A “no u-turn” sign should be installed with the left turn lane construction. However, it should be investigated thoroughly during the design of the left turn lane.
3. The current situation is a safety concern which the Phase 1 improvements address. Phase 2, a traffic signal, will alleviate any increased delays on the Stanton Hall approach.
4. The crepe myrtles that could potentially obstruct sight distance should be removed.

1.4 Ormond Boulevard at Plantation Road

Urban Systems Recommendations: It is not recommended that a traffic signal be installed at this intersection. However, existing signs south of the intersection on the east side of the street cause line of sight obstructions and have been recommended for removal.

OCA Comments: The OCA would like to add a recommendation to have an additional entrance to the 50-60 single family housing development that connects to Plantation Road to help relieve traffic problems on Stanton Hall Drive.

Response: It is noted that Plantation Road has enough capacity to handle the additional traffic and that Stanton Hall Drive is already near capacity and may not be able to handle the additional traffic.

1.5 Ormond Boulevard as a cut through

Urban Systems Recommendations: To reduce the amount of traffic that uses Ormond Boulevard as a cut through, it is recommended that Harding Road be improved to make it more appealing to drivers.

OCA: NO Comments

1.6 Villere Drive/Houma's Place at Ormond Boulevard

OCA Comments: OCA Members stated concerns about drivers turning left out of Houma's Place against northbound traffic flow in the median opening at Villere Drive instead of traveling north to Stanton Hall Drive to make a proper u-turn to go southbound.

Response: Field observations indicate that the geometric configuration of the median opening, the angle of Villere Drive and the location of the Houma's Place approach encourage the westbound left turn through the median opening. Further investigation would be needed to document an accident problem, if any, and to identify and/or warrant recommendations at this location.

1.7 Cypress Cove/Villere Drive at Ormond Boulevard

OCA Comments: OCA Members stated concerns about vehicles traveling southbound on Ormond Boulevard using the median opening at Villere Drive then traveling against northbound traffic flow to turn left into Cypress Drive instead of continuing to Asphodel Drive and performing a u-turn to access Cypress Cove. There was also a concern with two palm trees in the median south of Villere Drive that obstruct the sight distance for left turning vehicles out of Villere Drive stored in the median.

Response: The original geometry of Cypress Cove at Ormond Boulevard proposed a median cut approximately 50 feet south of the median cut at Villere Drive to provide access to Cypress Cove. Public comment opposed this median cut therefore the developer removed the median open from the project. It is recommended that the previously proposed median cut be installed. It is also recommended that the palm trees obstructing sight distance be removed and/or relocated.