

## Cape CRA likes plan for entrance

Board asks for a few refinements

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Street light poles wrapped in bouganvilla and a wooden walkway along the Caloosahatchee River where the Cape Coral Bridge melds into Cape Coral Parkway pleased the eye of the Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency on Tuesday.

"You're taking unsightly concrete poles and adding an accent of color," said landscape architect Joe Beck of Vanasse Daylor, which was hired by the CRA to come up with ideas to make the entrance to the city more attractive.

Board members liked the poles that would be interspersed with palm trees along the eastbound lane. They also liked the way Beck moved the westbound lane slightly north to make room for a median about 25 feet wide between the two lanes.

But it was the median, a 5-foot high foundation for shade trees, where Beck's plan ran into opposition.

The plan should emphasize the views of the water and the median doesn't do that, board member Carolyn Conant said. Not only that, she said it creates a maintenance problem for city workers trying to tend to the trees.

"It's going to cut your view in half," added board member Robert Greco. But the idea of using the median to separate the two lanes of traffic was a "home run," Greco said.

Beck contended that median creates a green screen that softens the view for drivers coming down off the bridge. It creates a sense of enclosure, which also has a calming effect on traffic, Beck said.

Board Chairman Gary Aubuchon agreed a median is needed, but he said 5 feet is too high. Something half the size might be more appropriate, he said.

Board member John Jacobsen also liked Beck's plan because it substitutes a view of trees and water to the north of the road for a view of oncoming traffic.

The board asked Beck to continue to refine the plan and look at more possibilities because they will have an influence on a pending downtown traffic circulation study.

The plan will give the consultant selected to do the study an idea of what the CRA thinks can be done at the bridge, Aubuchon said.

The city is asking for proposals now from consultants interested in doing the study, which will look at traffic patterns downtown as well as near the bridge. The study could start sometime during the first three months of 2005.

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