**Thursday, January 19th, 2017**

**Friends of The Underline presents:**

**Public Meeting: The Underline Brickell Backyard Phase I Design Proposals**

Held at Southside Elementary School at 5:30pm

Moderated by: Keith Fernandez

Remarks by:

Xavier Suarez, Miami-Dade Commissioner, District 7

Francis Suarez, City of Miami Commissioner, District 4

Alice Bravo, Director of Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works

Meg Daly, Founder & President of Friends of The Underline (FTUL)

Isabel Castilla & Lisa Switkin, James Corner Field Operations

Irene Hegedus, Chief of Miami-Dade County Transportation Enhancements

**Miami-Dade Commissioner Xavier Suarez**

* Upon first hearing of the project, Commissioner Suarez thought it was very unrealistic. Now it has become a reality. Commissioner Suarez mentioned the project to his son, Frances Suarez, who was then able to procure $50 million in funding. Of that amount we have already realized $5.8 million, just from one project. We will see more as projects are developed along US1. There are four projects in the works, with close to $1 billion in new construction, and the city is negotiating with all of them.
* The city is to become pedestrian and bicycle friendly. DOT and Public Works are coming together on this, but the most credit goes to Meg Daly – congratulations and thank you.

**Alice Bravo**

**Miami-Dade County Director of Public Transportation and Public Works**

* We will be discussing Phase 1 (Brickell Backyard). We are working together to increase mobility. There are numerous benefits to using mass transit and the goal is to create an area everyone can enjoy. The county is collaborating with the Parks department and Friends of the Underline to make that happen. Meg Daly and her team are securing funding sources and we are moving quickly, addressing the safety of residents and options of better access to public transportation. Mayor Gimenez is very supportive, advising his team to give the project top priority.

**Representative of the office of Commissioner Joe Carrollo**

* Commissioner Carrollo is excited and looking forward to starting Phase 1. He is hopeful that it fulfills the hopes, desires and needs of our community.

**Isabel Castilla | Lisa Switkin**

**Design team - James Corner Field Operations**

* A year ago we were here discussing the master plan and today we have come a long way to discuss the first phase of this project; Brickell Backyard.
* In 2015, there were three public meetings to regarding the different areas of the underline and we asked what the people wanted. This led us to seven goals.
	+ A Corridor with designated paths – multimodal corridor (pedestrians/bicyclists)
	+ Green corridor
	+ Different amenities – food/exercise/music
	+ Improved intersections
	+ Connecting to a larger trail network
	+ Synergistic development benefiting the Underline
	+ Art in Public Places (one of the largest outdoor galleries)
* There are three layers to this:
	+ Paths/Intersections
		- Concept: if bikes are going faster than cars, it will encourage greater use of the paths.
		- Future paths: Cyclists (trail will be wider to accommodate two-way bicycle use) as well as pedestrians/rollerbladers/etc
* Planting
	+ Continuous green corridors with native pine rockland. Keeping nature present, minimizing maintenance with proper plant selection and creating butterfly gardens to enhance nature.
	+ 70% recreation/nature (seven miles) 30% destinations (three miles). Slide illustrating spine presented:
* Mobility and Sustainability
	+ Grassroots efforts creating excitement.
	+ Miami can become interconnected, facilitating bicyclists and pedestrians to get around.
* Why Brickell/Why Now: Brickell is developing rapidly. It is a natural place to begin because Brickell needs this type of attraction the most.
	+ Brickell Backyard represents the first half of a mile (from the Miami river to S.W. 13th Street). JCFO wants to listen to what the public wants. Last year, they created boards to illustrate and learned the following:
		- Interests for Brickell:
			* Ecology/natural habitats
			* Bring green space
			* Arts/culture
			* Health and fitness
* Uses they would value the most: ability to enjoy nature, art and cafes
* What they would like to see
	+ Basketball/Handball
	+ Bike station/repairs
	+ Civic space

Brickell Backyard is one of the most complicated areas of The Underline. It is surrounded by streets. The concept will include a procession of rooms:

* Dog Park –(Between the Miami River and SW 7th Street) This aspect is pending due to funding; however, JCFO is committed to getting it done.
* Bike Path - (from SW 7th St. to the river; to encourage to mix public transportation and cycling) There will be bicycle paths on the west side of the street to ensure safe/enjoyable pedestrian paths.
* Basketball Court & Gym – (between SW 7th and SW 8th) highly used, regulation sized basketball court, surrounded by a running track, exercise equipment on the side, SW 1st Court bicycle path will run through, large sidewalk on SW 1 avenue. Visitors will have the opportunity to make new friends, see activities occurring, you can use the basketball court for other things as well like live music performances for instance. A 14’ high fence will be placed around the basketball court - a green mesh, which draws you in. There will be climbing, stretching bars and space for CrossFit.
* Promenade **(**Between 8th Street – 10th Street) - This area has the most activity on Brickell. Lots of people/crossing/flows. The bike path will be in the center, surrounded by planting beds to eliminate injuries to pedestrians. The goal is to create areas to gather/mini kiosks (food) - the survey asks what the public wants to see there.
* Playroom -This will be fun and flexible for families. The porch will have a swing set, to provide a refreshing moment. The main room will have dominos, cards, chess (similar to Domino Park on SW 8th Street), to encourage millennials to mix in with the Miami culture.
* Dining Room - The dining room will have an exceptionally long table for communal dining/lunch. This will be somewhat of a living room for Brickell, which will allow for people watching.
* Existing use of this space:
	+ There is not a lot of activity. The goal is to replace it with lush planting and activities. There is not enough space to put in a full playground, that’s why we have included just a hopscotch area for children. The swings can be used while waiting for the bus. With respect to seating, JCFO wants something for everyone. Illustrations were presented showing the planned kiosks, table and chairs.
	+ The Bike Lot -Currently the area designated for the bike lot is dark, dirty and has chickens throughout. JCFO plans to make this area special; a large bike parking lot, which will encourage the use of bikes and public transportation. There will be 52 spaces, shared bike stations, an area for repairs, and a pedestrian path in the middle. There will also be a large Underline sign, which lights up at night and doubles as a bike parking spot. JCFO will terrace the area in order to deal with an existing slope and provide a flat surface. There are plans to address safety and prevent vandalism. An additional slide illustrated the planned furnishings for the bike lot.
	+ The Oolite Room- JCFO is working with Southside Park to make this fluid. They will enhance natural vegetation, create beautiful gardens, seating areas and a place for children.
* The materials used will be light asphalt, oolite stone/salt rock concrete. The basketball court will have bright colors.
* Lighting- JCFO wants the lighting to be uniform and flexible (so that they can add lights to posts as needed, depending on the use). This will not bother residential areas.
* Image - JCFO will create a strong iconic identity, incorporate unique signage, and use consistent typography/colors in order to identity rooms, spray distance markers on the paths, encourage fun, provide directional information, marking on side of Metrorail structure, paths will have unique signage and separate lanes. Intersection will be designed for increased visibility for pedestrians and drivers.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

Panel: Meg Daly, Isabel Castilla, Lisa Switkin and Irene Hegedus

1. Will you be propagating storm water?

JCFO is working to drain onto the planting beds. This is important to them and the selection of plants is important to facilitate this. This will also help manage when you have too much water. The main goal is for the design to be beautiful, useful and sustainable.

1. How will tourists be encouraged to participate?

Making public space, creating an identity that is memorable and connecting it to where people are today. Also by using clear signage and by hosting events and activities that bring people outside and together. The Underline is already creating programming even though construction hasn’t started yet (for example – the Underlounge/Bike 305/yoga with Baptist Health).

1. Safety/Security

We are looking at all available options in what the best ways are to implement an effective level of security. This includes working with the municipalities and creating a space that fosters visibility and awareness.

1. Who will be responsible for daily maintenance?

The Underline has created a separate 501(c)3 that will oversee the maintenance and operations of The Underline once it has been constructed.

1. How will traffic be affected by construction?

There will be some disruption. All parties recognize this is an issue and will therefore work together to create the most effective and least disruptive plans to minimize these effects.

1. Is there space in the Bike Lot for the Bikeshare Station?

Yes. There will be bike share and a repair at the station.

1. Will There be Shade Over the Dining Room?

The dining room will be under the Metrorail structure. There is limited space because it is necessary to provide access to inspect the Metrorail. It is not a very open space; however shade is provided throughout the area. Powder coated metal furniture will be implemented which allows for more controlled temperatures.

1. In developing the plans did you reference Miami’s plan for a sustainable future?

Yes – Parks and Recreation was involved in the plan.

1. In 2015 we asked for a water feature, more greenery and a skate park. Why are they missing from the plan?

The skate park is still coming. JCFO is trying to establish the best uses first. Right now, the skate park does not fit where they initially thought it would and they are trying to find the right location. Also, they are trying to ensure the right amount of green for visibility/safety reasons.

1. What will be done to make crossings safer?

Proper crosswalk/alignment of the path and proper signage. JCFO is working to understand what is needed such as signals that are flashing with lights. There is a study underway for this exact purpose. JCFO wants to ensure all bases are covered and the plan works for everyone.

1. To what extent are you working with Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden?

JCFO worked with them throughout the master plan phase in order to pick the best species to include in The Underline and will be meeting with them again on January 20.

1. What is the timing of construction of phase 1?

The design documents are 30% complete, they are putting the plans out and pushing hard to have everything completed in a timely manner – there is no exact date as of yet.

1. How will you control the homeless population on the MPath?

An active/well used space is the best way to combat any kind of vandalism or inappropriate use of the area. It’s important to remember however, that The Underline is there for everyone and this issue will work itself out.

1. Will lighting be on all night?

Yes, but it is aimed towards the public space not towards residential units. There will be a smart system with sensors that can be dimmed and are motion activated.

1. Soccer Fields? Is that a possibility?

This is a great idea but it does not fit in this space right now. We could revisit the possibility in the future.

1. Surfacing?

Rubber is great on the feet but costly. It might be in some areas.

1. Is there early coordination of traffic south of Vizcaya?

There is a study at DOT now for the future – hope to see proposals soon.

1. Will there be a ribbon cutting ceremony?

Yes and everyone will be invited. Shooting for the end of the year. This is the fastest moving project of its scope in the world.

**Closing remarks by City of Miami Mayor Frances Suarez:**

* Idea of everyone having to “dream big.”
* Discussed bringing impact fees from constructions on both sides of the highway back to this project. This endeavor already brought in $5 million in just 5 months - this was a very creative solution that really works.
* A world class city is defined by its public spaces. These decisions shape your personal life for many years. It is hard to do projects like this but there is confidence in the team behind this initiative and the overall mission of The Underline.