



Town of Lake Park Town Commission

Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date: November 4, 2026

Originating Department: Public Works
Presentation, Discussion & Direction – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) - US-1 Median Landscaping Project (Silver Beach Road North to Palmetto Drive)(FDOT FM 450677-1-52-01) Maintenance Commitment Letter and Long-Term Maintenance Responsibility

Agenda Title: Responsibility

Agenda Category: New Business

Approved by Town Manager: _____ **Date:** _____

Cost of Item: \$0.00 **Funding Source:** N/A (no current-year cost)

Account Number: N/A **Finance Signature:** _____

Advertised:

Date: N/A **Newspaper:** N/A

Attachments: 1. Draft Maintenance Commitment Letter, FM 450677-1-52-01 (with limiting language accepted by FDOT)
2. FDOT consultant Landscape Maintenance Estimates: Low, Medium and High (updated October 12, 2026)
3. FDOT / Cotleur & Hearing concept plans and plant board, US-1 Medians
4. FDOT consultant Street Tree Options sheet: Live Oak, Gumbo Limbo, Green Buttonwood (October 2026)

Please initial one:

_____ Yes, I have notified everyone.
_____ Not applicable in this case

Summary Explanation/Background:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has requested the Town to execute a Maintenance Commitment Letter regarding a stand-alone landscape and irrigation project within the US Highway 1 (State Road 5) medians, from Silver Beach Road to Palmetto Drive [FDOT Financial Management No. (FM) 450677-1-52-01].

If approved, the FDOT would fund the design and installation and following a two-year contractor establishment period, the Town would be responsible to take over and fund/manage all landscape and irrigation maintenance under a Maintenance Memorandum of Agreement (MMOA).

On March 4, 2026, the Commission voted 5-0 to adopt FDOT's plan for the medians and agreed that, after the establishment period, the Town would be responsible for the maintenance (level) program, which would be based on three (3) different proposed levels of maintenance options (required to be approved by the Town).

Note: FDOT delivered the three-level proposal on April 16, 2026 and updated the options on October 12, 2026. Additionally, FDOT's consultant has confirmed that the requested letter would not commit the Town to a specific design or maintenance level. The FDOT will not prepare the MMOA until it has the signed letter by the Town. The MMOA is expected to be brought back to the Town Commission on December 2, 2026.

The Town Commission is requested to consider and determine the maintenance level and authorize the requested Maintenance Commitment Letter be executed by the Mayor. This will enable the FDOT to proceed forward with the MMOA, which will be brought back to the Town Commission for consideration.

Project Background:

- a) March 4, 2026. FDOT and its landscape architect, Cotleur & Hearing, presented the project for discussion and direction, not signatures. Commissioners asked for a low-, medium-, and high-maintenance breakdown and information on tree selection, citing the Live Oak's roots, leaf drop, and drainage effects, and a preference for the lowest-maintenance materials. Public speakers supported native plantings and asked that Variegated Schefflera be excluded because of invasive-species concerns. FDOT stated that if the Town chose not to cover maintenance, it would install only grass. The Commission then voted 5-0 (Mayor Michaud, Vice Mayor Hensley, Commissioners Thomas, Linden and O'Rourke) on a modified motion to adopt the plan FDOT established for the US-1 medians, with the Town agreeing that after the establishment period it will establish a maintenance program for those improvements, with a proposal for three levels of maintenance costs.
- b) October 7, 2026. FDOT's consultant asked for the signed letter by October 30, stating that otherwise FDOT would proceed with a design reflecting FDOT's own level of maintenance (large trees and native palms only). Staff advised that the Commission meets next on November 4. FDOT then agreed to accept the letter by November 6, 2026, with the irrigation permit package due to the South Florida Water Management District by November 11 and the complete MMOA documents with final plans due to FDOT by November 23.
- c) October 11-12, 2026. FDOT's consultant confirmed that FDOT accepts language limiting the Town's commitment to the design and maintenance level the Town approves, and invited the Town to use its own letterhead and return the letter after the Commission meeting. He stated that no MMOA draft will be prepared until the signed letter is on file, clarified what the estimates exclude (see review note 2), and delivered updated estimates and a Street Tree Options sheet on October 12.

Project Description, Funding and Schedule:

The project would install roughly 1,813 feet of landscaping (i.e., canopy trees, palms, accent trees, shrubs, groundcover, and an irrigation system) and an estimated 6,286 square feet of shrub beds on three US-1 median segments:

- a) Median 1 (approx. 196 feet)
- b) Median 2 (approx. 794 feet)
- c) Median 3 (approx. 823 feet)

FDOT would completely fund the design and installation and the Town would not be responsible to provide a financial match. Following a two-year establishment period maintained by FDOT's installation contractor, Town maintenance would begin in approximately summer 2030 at the earliest.

FDOT expects to let the project in October 2027 with construction projected to start in January 2028.

Estimated Annual Maintenance Cost (FDOT Consultant, Updated October 12, 2026):

Tier	Basis (per FDOT estimate)	Annual Cost (2026 \$)	Projected 2030 Annual Cost*
Low	Reduced palette of no-trim shrubs and low-maintenance palms; reduced bed area; monthly weeding and irrigation upkeep; periodic mulching	\$15,498	\$16,893
Medium	Reduced shrub pruning; monthly weeding and irrigation upkeep; palms fertilized twice a year; Oaks and palms pruned for clearance only	\$29,230	\$31,861
High	Full palette; monthly shrub trimming and weeding; pest control; tree, palm and sod fertilization; annual pruning	\$37,300	\$40,657

** FDOT's figure escalated 9% (3% per year, simple) for maintenance starting in 2030; ten years at the 2030 amount would be about \$169,000 (Low), \$319,000 (Medium) and \$407,000 (High). FDOT describes the estimates as a courtesy for planning and comparison; the Town's actual cost would be set through competitive procurement.*

Live Oak Alternatives:

The concept uses Live Oak as the canopy tree. On October 7 and 11, 2026, FDOT's consultant identified Gumbo Limbo and Green Buttonwood as the only suitable Oak replacements for FDOT roadway applications, and the October 12 estimates and Street Tree Options sheet list these three species. The April list names Sycamore, Royal Poinciana, and Floss Silk, which are no longer recommended.

Species	Mature size	Advantages	Concerns
Live Oak (current design)	40-60 ft tall; 60-120 ft spread	Best canopy and shade; little fertilizing needed	Very aggressive roots that may lift sidewalks; heavy leaf drop twice a year; root barriers proposed to protect curbs

Species	Mature size	Advantages	Concerns
Gumbo Limbo (native)	25-50 ft tall; 25-50 ft spread	Slightly less aggressive roots and less leaf drop than Oak; highly salt-, wind- and drought-tolerant; sculptural form	Can still be aggressively rooted, with possible long-term curb impact; semi-deciduous in winter; some disease susceptibility; about 15 ft of vehicle clearance recommended
Green Buttonwood	30-45 ft tall; 20-30 ft spread	Less aggressively rooted; evergreen; highly salt- and drought-tolerant	Older trees can look gnarled and irregular; bloom and fruit drop can stain concrete; root barrier still recommended; can be more wind-prone

FDOT's consultant advised against Mahogany (fruit drop); if the Town does not proceed with a canopy tree, the next-best options are Vera wood, Queen Crape Myrtle, or Natchez Crape Myrtle.

Fiscal Impact:

Maintenance costs would begin in approximately summer 2030 (late in FY 2029-30). They would recur each year, estimated by FDOT at \$15,498 to \$37,300 in 2026 dollars (\$16,893 to \$40,657 projected for 2030) before the cost items noted above. Funding would be requested through the annual budget process, and maintenance would be procured competitively.

Alternatives:

- A) Approve the commitment with conditions (recommended). Continues FDOT's enhanced design and the Town would provide input on design and maintenance level, at a recurring annual Town cost.
- B) Decline the commitment that was provided by the Commission on March 4, 2026. FDOT has said it would then install only grass, or a design reflecting its own level of maintenance (large trees and native palms only). The Town would incur no maintenance cost.
- C) Defer the commitment. FDOT has indicated it would proceed with Alternative B.

Recommended Motion:

The Town Commission consider, discuss and provide direction on the proposed landscaping improvements and maintenance cost options related to the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) US-1 Median Landscaping Project (Silver Beach Road North to Palmetto Drive)(FDOT FM 450677-1-52-01); and provide direction on the proposed FDOT Maintenance Commitment Letter, if approved, Mayor to execute.