RESOLUTION NO. 5386

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 17-043

A RESOLUTION OF THE LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION STATING ITS POSITION ON THE FLORIDA DOT DOWNTOWN LAKELAND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE KENTUCKY AVENUE (FPID# 436653-1-22-01) AND NEW YORK AVENUE (FPID# 436656-1-22-01) CROSSINGS

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Transportation (Florida DOT) and CSX Transportation planned and implemented certain rail projects in Central Florida that included Florida DOT's purchase of a 61-mile section of the CSX "A" Line in Osceola, Orange, Seminole and Volusia County to accommodate the SUNRail commuter rail project and construction of an Integrated Logistics Center in Winter Haven; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the Lakeland City Commission, FDOT District One completed its Rail Traffic Evaluation completed in 2009, which evaluated the impacts of diverted freight traffic on the 11-mile section of the combined CSX "A" and "S" Line between Auburndale and Lakeland and other crossings within Polk County and identified potential corridors for a new freight rail line around the urban areas to minimize community impacts between the Winter Haven ILC and Coleman in Sumter County; and

WHEREAS, Policy 2B of the Lakeland Comprehensive Plan 2010-2020 states that the City of Lakeland will work with the Florida DOT to ensure that railroad crossing safety and operational improvements are implemented as recommended in FDOT's 2009 Rail Traffic Evaluation Study; and

WHEREAS, the City utilized the data and analysis contained in the Rail Traffic Evaluation in the establishment of the Lakeland Quiet Zone in 2014; and
WHEREAS, the New York Avenue rail crossing (US DOT ID# 624289R) was closed in support of the Lakeland Quiet Zone through a Stipulation of Parties Agreement between CSX, the City and Florida DOT that was fully-executed on October 16, 2013; and

WHEREAS, New York Avenue is a component of the City’s Lake-to-Lake Bikeway Network and is a component of the Citywide Pathways Vision Plan as adopted in the Lakeland Comprehensive Plan 2010-2020; and

WHEREAS, the City is implementing a “cycle track” bicycle facility along New York Avenue between Lime Street and Main Street, with construction scheduled to occur with funding through Florida DOT (FPN# 433260-1) in Fiscal Year 2018; and

WHEREAS, Florida DOT commissioned its Polk Rail Study to further evaluate new freight rail corridors and focus on grade-separated bicycle/pedestrian and vehicular rail crossings in Downtown Lakeland; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lakeland provided Florida DOT with its operational and bicycle/pedestrian crossing priorities from the Polk Rail Study in a letter dated December 5, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the City’s priorities included 1.) design and construction of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) operational and motorist advisory message board improvements in Central Lakeland, 2.) Kentucky Avenue Pedestrian Overpass, 3.) New York Avenue Pedestrian/Bicycle Underpass and 4.) Lake Mirror Pedestrian Overpass (new AMTRAK Station); and

WHEREAS, Florida DOT has conducted scoping and analysis for the ITS operational improvements in the Downtown area that is scheduled to be implemented through a design-build contract in Fiscal Year 2018 (FPN# 436650-1) and proceeded with the Lakeland Pedestrian Crossing PD&E Study for the Kentucky Avenue and New York Avenue crossings that is scheduled to be concluded in Fiscal Year 2018; and

WHEREAS, project phases for the New York Avenue (FPN# 4366561) and Kentucky Avenue (FPN# 4366531) crossings are programmed in Florida DOT’s Adopted 2017/18-2021/22 Five-Year Work Program, including construction funding for the Kentucky Avenue Overpass in FY Fiscal Year 2021.

WHEREAS, Florida DOT’s Downtown Lakeland Pedestrian Crossing PD&E Study included public outreach activities including presentations to the Lakeland Downtown
Development Authority by City staff at its retreat on February 8, 2017, Lakeland Historic Preservation Board on March 23, 2017 and a public meeting held on April 27, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the City has undertaken a feasibility study for a new parking garage in the Downtown area, including a potential site on an existing parking lot on the Lakeland Police Department headquarters’ property; and

WHEREAS, the Lakeland Community Redevelopment Agency commissioned a visioning effort for approximately ten acres of land it owns immediately north of the Lakeland Police Department and is negotiating with a development team that desires a grade-separated connection between this property and the Lake Mirror Promenade; and

WHEREAS, Florida DOT sketched a potential location and alignment for a pedestrian overpass between the Lakeland Police Department parking lot and AMTRAK Station on Lake Mirror; and

WHEREAS, staff of the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (known as the “Citrus Connection”) has expressed concerns about the impacts of additional freight rail traffic on the operations of its main bus terminal on State Road 37 (Florida Avenue) at the Downtown Lakeland rail crossing and has worked to include a Downtown Lakeland Intermodal Center line item in the draft Transit Development Plan FY 2017-2026 prepared by the Polk Transportation Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA AS FOLLOWS:

1. The stakeholder input received to date for the New York Avenue overpass indicate that its implementation may be premature until additional redevelopment and other citywide pathways investments are made north and south of this crossing. Stakeholder feedback generally preferred more compact design alternatives at this location.

2. Stakeholders generally oppose the construction of an overpass at Munn Park adjacent to Kentucky Avenue, particularly given associated estimated construction costs.

3. Safety improvements are needed in the vicinity of Munn Park at the Tennessee Avenue and Kentucky Avenue at-grade rail crossings to better prevent pedestrians from crossing the rail line when the existing four-quadrant gates have been activated due to approaching trains.
4. Florida DOT is asked to complete the New York Avenue Overpass project through right-of-way, then put construction on hold until a future date when other nearby bicycle/pedestrian connections are made.

5. Florida DOT is asked to take the following actions pertaining to the Kentucky Avenue Overpass project:
   a. Complete PD&E Study with selection of No-Build Alternative at this location.
   b. Fund at-grade safety enhancements in vicinity of Munn Park, including Tennessee Avenue and Kentucky Avenue crossings.
   c. Re-Allocate all remaining project funds to a PD&E Study of Lake Mirror/AMTRAK overpass and subsequent production phases or program funding for a new Lake Mirror/AMTRAK area overpass line item in the Five-Year Work Program.

6. FDOT is asked to conduct a study of various Downtown Lakeland Intermodal Center (Intermodal Center) concepts that could incorporate any Lake Mirror/AMTRAK area overpass, a parking garage, a potential public transportation facility accommodating Citrus Connection and Greyhound buses, and accommodate future expansions that provide parking capacity to support any future commuter and/or intercity passenger rail service that is extended to Lakeland from the Orlando or Tampa Bay metropolitan areas.

7. The final design and alignment of the Lake Mirror area overpass and components of the Intermodal Center will depend on technical analyses and stakeholder input that is received during the planning phases of their implementation.

PASSED AND CERTIFIED AS TO PASSAGE this 21st day of August, A.D. 2017.

R. HOWARD WIGGS, MAYOR

ATTEST: KELLY S. KOOS, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CORRECTNESS: TIMOTHY J. McCausland
CITY ATTORNEY