



# Lake Wales Police Department

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## Memorandum

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Commission  
**From:** David Black, Deputy Chief of Police  
**Via:** James Slaton, City Manager  
Chris Velasquez, Chief of Police  
**Date:** June 28, 2022  
**Subject:** Janie Howard Wilson Elementary – Florida Avenue Temporary Road Closure at Scenic Highway  
**Synopsis:** The City Commission will consider a request to allow the staff of Janie Howard Wilson Elementary to close Florida Avenue at Scenic Highway on school days 30 (thirty) minutes prior to school beginning until 10 (ten) minutes after and 30 (thirty) minutes prior to dismissal until 10 (ten) minutes after.

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### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Commission consider taking the following action:

1. Approve the temporary closure of Florida Avenue to and from Scenic Highway. School staff will use multiple traffic cones on Florida Avenue at Scenic Highway to accomplish this.
  - School hours are 7:40am – 2:40pm (Early release days end at 12:20pm).
  - Morning road closure times will be 7:10am – 7:50am.
  - Afternoon road closure times will be 2:10pm – 2:50pm. (Early release 11:50pm-12:30pm).
  - School staff will place and remove the cones daily at the beginning and end of each time frame.

### BACKGROUND

Janie Howard Wilson Elementary is located on Florida Avenue just west of Scenic Highway. Vehicular traffic for student drop off and pick up is causing traffic congestion and safety concerns extending from Florida Avenue onto Scenic Highway. Two different factors are contributing to this increased traffic congestion. Traffic volume on Scenic Highway has increased this year due to the five-year construction project at SR 60 and US 27. Local citizens are now using Scenic Highway more to avoid the US 27 at SR 60 and Central Avenue intersections, and some of the construction detours implemented by the Florida Department of Transportation use Scenic Highway. The second factor is the increase in vehicular traffic due to general population growth.

In the morning, parents arriving at the school using Scenic Highway cause traffic congestion for northbound traffic while waiting to make a left turn onto Florida Avenue. In the afternoons, parents picking up their children line Florida Avenue to Scenic Highway. This line of vehicles extends onto Scenic Highway where parents park their vehicles on the west side right-of-way. This line of vehicles obstructs the view of drivers stopped at the stop sign on Florida Avenue attempting to enter Scenic Highway.

The Police Department worked with Janie Howard Wilson midway through the last school year on rerouting the vehicular traffic for student drop off without closing Florida Avenue. The school asked parents approaching the school using Scenic Highway to turn onto Lincoln Avenue and then north on C Street to approach the school. Once parking on Florida Avenue was full, the school asked parents to park on C Street without blocking residential driveways. The Police Department did assist with the diversion of the traffic at Florida Avenue to evaluate whether or not this would be effective. This was effective and the department did not receive any complaints from residents on C Street.

The Police Department attempted to make contact at eight single-family residences and one set of apartments located off Florida Avenue on a side street. These are the residents who would be most affected by the closure. Seven of the eight single-family residents said they understood and agreed with the closure as presented. The department was unable to contact the other resident. The set of apartments contained 10 units and five of the units currently have residents. Three of the five residents said they understood and agreed with the closure as presented. The department was unable to contact the other two residents. A majority of residents support this proposal, however the department will continue to seek input from those remaining to be contacted.

Janie Howard Wilson Elementary has agreed to purchase the cones needed to properly close Florida Avenue. Janie Howard Wilson Elementary will place and remove cones for each time period daily to facilitate the temporary road closure during the school year.

#### OTHER OPTIONS

Do not approve the temporary road closure.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

There will be no fiscal impact on the City of Lake Wales.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Map of intersection and recommended temporary road closure.

Map of traffic routing for student drop off and pick up.