



Image courtesy of L.A. Design

The "streetscape" design at 56th Street and Temple Heights Road will include new landscaping, decorative lighting, additional traffic signals, benches, bike racks and attractive refuse receptacles. The design is expected to be used as a prototype for the larger-scale road improvements at Busch Boulevard and 56th Street, the gateway to the city's redevelopment project.

Project To Set Guidelines For Larger-Scale Improvements

1-BLOCK 'STREETSCAPING' DESIGN UNDER WAY

By JOYCE MCKENZIE

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For landscape architect Rachel Rodgers, her primary focus in designing projects has always centered on creating that ultimate "wow" factor.

The Temple Terrace resident speaks from her nearly 30 years of experience in the field, and can cite numerous beautification projects she's completed for such clients as Disney World, MacDill Air Force Base, the Florida Department of Transportation, Kennedy Space Center and the cities of Tampa, Sarasota and Lakeland.

"Each has its own unique character," said Rodgers, the president and sole owner of L.A. Design. Prior to starting her own business 11 years ago, she was employed by a Top 100 Engineering Firm in the U.S., where she served as landscape architecture vice president.

One of her current projects is designing a one-block "streetscaping" prototype along Temple Heights Road and 56th Street that would incorporate guidelines to be used along the 56th Street corridor to the south bordering Temple Terrace's 38-acre downtown New Urbanism-style redevelopment center. Plans call for it to be a mixed-use project of retail, commercial, office,

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residential and civic/cultural spaces.

"We decided to create a prototypical block because we needed to address the reality of the site conditions," Rodgers said. "We've put together some of the best people in the state to work on this project."

Included in her design are landscaping, additional traffic signals, decorative lighting, benches, bike racks and attractive trash receptacles.

"We want something that's timeless, classic, that's both pedestrian- and driver-friendly and creates continuity," she said. "Every project I do is unique, but I get a little passionate about this one when it's in my own backyard."

The city intends to invest \$5.7 million over the next several years toward improv-

ing roadways in the redevelopment area. The good news, according to community services director Ralph Bosek, is that the majority of the work will be funded through federal, state and local grants.

Rodgers, Bosek, City Engineer Joe Motta and a yet unnamed consultant plan to spend up to three months fine tuning the pilot project's design.

"It's really going to add some pizzazz to those streets," Bosek said.

He added that construction on the prototype project is expected to begin later this year and is projected to be completed in approximately six months. The larger-scale roadway renovations of 56th Street and Busch Boulevard will likely get under way in 2008.