

Police say speeding not only traffic issue

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Miami Beach Police want North Beach residents to know that their traffic problems don't begin and end with speeders.

At a meeting Wednesday at the North Shore Recreation Center, a panel of police officers gave residents the preliminary results of a Florida Department of Transportation traffic study, which focused on Collins and Harding avenues from 75th to 85th streets.

The study showed that accidents in that area are not only caused by speeding, but also by poor on-street parking conditions and intersections with obstructed views.

Residents have been concerned with the thoroughfare after the fatalities of two pedestrians on Harding last month, one in the 7700 block and the other in the 7800 block.

Police said the drivers in both accidents were impaired.

"There's no way to anticipate some of the things that have occurred," said Maj. Gerry Tollefson. "People are not always flying through, it's not

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always directly related to speed."

The FDOT report suggests that on-street parking dimensions should be increased to eight feet and parking should be prohibited within certain distances of an intersection.

It also recommends modifying or relocating the landscaping at Harding and 77th Street, as well as strictly enforcing the speed limit.

"It's going to cause a huge parking problem if we reduce the parking by 85 feet," said Capt. Tom Skinner.

Police are developing a program that will track the top 25 problem intersections in hopes of reducing accidents in Miami Beach. In North Beach, police say two of those are 69th and 71st streets as they cross Harding.

"I think traffic is a major issue," said Tollefson. "When people come to talk to me they never tell me about robberies or murders, they talk about accidents. You see accidents every day."