



*"The Capital City of the Palm Beaches"*

August 2, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

If you are looking for someone to help you with public outreach, I highly recommend Sharon Merchant. She has common sense, perseverance, and a respectful assertive way with people. Importantly, she knows our community well and who to call for help.

One of the greatest challenges I faced when I became Mayor of West Palm Beach was the disorganization of our transportation issues. There were state, county, and city road construction projects everywhere I turned.

The communication among stakeholders, i.e. residents, business owners, commuters, city, county and the Florida Department of Transportation was almost non-existent. Roads were closing, utility service was being disrupted and traffic was being re-routed on a haphazard basis, with little or no notice to the public.

I hired Sharon Merchant as a transportation consultant to help work through the above challenges. Within 6 months we got on track. The City hired an engineering firm that helped us with public information. We engaged in productive weekly meetings with pertinent parties. We implemented the Mayor's Direct Response Team to immediately resolve problems.

In addition, we proactively met with neighbors and businesses, door-to-door if necessary, in areas where work was slated, to ensure minimal disruption. City representatives disseminated collateral materials to explain when work was going to take place and a direct number and name to call with questions.

Our road construction has not eased up, but thanks to Sharon Merchant, we have an organized communication program. We are not perfect, but the number of daily complaints has fallen dramatically.

Sincerely,

Lois J. Frankel  
Mayor

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