

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DATE: May 23, 2023

SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION REGARDING DIRECTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO HOLD COMMUNITY MEETINGS WITH OCEAN DRIVE STAKEHOLDERS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF PEDESTRIANIZING OCEAN DRIVE DURING CERTAIN HOURS OF THE DAY ONLY, WHILE REOPENING OCEAN DRIVE TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC.**

**HISTORY:**

Pursuant to the direction of the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”), Ocean Drive was re-opened to vehicular traffic in January 2022, from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The introduction of vehicular traffic onto Ocean Drive included a single southbound lane, and bi-directional bike lanes on the east side of the road. Additionally, the City Commission directed the Administration to create a temporary pedestrian plaza/promenade on Ocean Drive between 13<sup>th</sup> Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Place.

On December 21, 2022, the City Administration and Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (“DTPW”) staff met to discuss DTPW’s concerns with the current configuration of the promenade and associated operational challenges. During the meeting, DTPW staff expressed that a permit for the promenade as currently configured would not be approved and required that the City submit a modified plan to address the operational challenges as well as a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the modified plan for DTPW’s review and approval. The continuation of the promenade on a pilot basis would be contingent upon the County’s approval of the modified plan.

Over the past few months, City staff from various departments, including Police, Fire, Transportation and Mobility, Parking, Public Works, and Facilities and Fleet Management have worked together to develop a modified operational plan for the promenade that balances the needs and desires of the affected residents, property owners, businesses, stakeholder groups, City emergency services, and visitors, and which addresses the concerns expressed by DTPW. The proposed modified operational plan, described in further detail below, was transmitted to DTPW for its review and consideration on March 3, 2023. Attachment A includes Letter to Commission (“LTC”) #107-2023 dated March 4, 2023 which described the City’s recommended modified operational plan at that time.

**ANALYSIS**

The proposed modified operational plan consists of allowing vehicular traffic to access Ocean Drive via gate arms at 14 Place from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday – Saturday, which aligns with the time periods when most deliveries and services for the affected businesses occur. This operational plan is expected to drastically reduce the volume of delivery trucks and service vehicles which currently cannot access Ocean Drive within the promenade portion and must therefore perform their services from the alleyway. As such, by reducing the number of trucks and service vehicles during the early morning hours when the bulk of this activity typically occurs, the City Administration believes this operational change will address DTPW’s concern regarding the volume of vehicles using and potentially blocking the alleyway and the challenges associated with that operation.

DTPW responded via a letter dated March 28, 2023 (Attachment B), reaffirming its concerns with the high southbound traffic volumes along Ocean Court alleyway as a result of no vehicular access onto Ocean Drive within the promenade. DTPW identified two alternatives that would be acceptable to limit the general traffic along 14 Place/Ocean Court alleyway. In addition, once an alternative is selected, DTPW recommends a 90-day pilot project implementation. Both alternatives proffered by DTPW would allow vehicles to access the promenade from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. City staff is evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of both alternatives, and recently met with DTPW staff to discuss the City’s concerns with the concepts developed by DTPW. The City and DTPW are planning to hold a community meeting with Ocean Drive residents and stakeholders on June 1, 2023 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to obtain input on the two alternatives developed by DTPW prior to making a final recommendation on the preferred alternative. Pursuant to DTPW’s request, once an alternative is selected, the City will submit a permit application and methodology for DTPW review and approval prior to implementing the 90-day pilot project.

Furthermore, City staff is working with DTPW to jointly develop a methodology for analysis of the pilot. Upon completion of the pilot, the City must submit a signed and sealed report documenting the results. The findings will be utilized to determine whether the pilot is effective or further adjustments are required. The Transportation and Mobility Department has reached out to one of its rotational traffic engineering consultants to prepare a scope of services and price proposal for the traffic analysis required by DTPW for a modified configuration of the promenade on a pilot basis. The costs associated with a traffic study and the implementation of any changes to the current promenade configuration have not been determined at this time and require further analysis.

Additionally, the City is currently in the process of engaging Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc. for the design of Ocean Drive from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street as part of General Obligation (“G.O.”) Bond Project #31 to reconfigure Ocean Drive on a long-term basis pursuant to Request for Qualifications No. 2022-436-ND and the Art Deco Cultural District (“ADCD”) vision plan. The consultant’s scope of work will include analyzing the feasibility of configuring Ocean Drive with two travel lanes, one travel lane, or fully pedestrian. During the design phase, the consultant will hold community meetings to obtain input and provide feedback.

**CONCLUSION:**

Given the ongoing efforts by the City and DTPW to evaluate the viability of potential modifications to the current configuration of the Ocean Drive promenade, the City, jointly with DTPW, expects to conduct a community meeting with Ocean Drive stakeholders on June 1, 2023 to share and obtain feedback on the two concepts developed by DTPW prior to selection of an alternative and implementation of a 90-day pilot. Additionally, once the modified promenade configuration is implemented on a pilot basis, it may be prudent and efficient to coordinate community meetings in tandem with the design consultant being engaged for the G.O. Bond project as the design consultant will be evaluating the feasibility of various long-term street configuration options.

**Applicable Area**

South Beach

**Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?**

Yes

**Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?**

No

**Strategic Connection**

Mobility - Improve the walking and biking experience.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Type
<a href="#">Attachment A -LTC Ocean Drive Pedestrian Plaza Pilot - Update #2</a>	Memo
<a href="#">Attachment B – Response Letter from Miami-Dade County dated March 28, 2023</a>	Memo
<a href="#">Attachment C - Referral Item C4 AC, February 1, 2023</a>	Memo