

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: September 11, 2024

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE, AT ITS JULY 10, 2024 MEETING, AND DIRECTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF CROSSWALKS IN SCHOOL ZONES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE STUDENT SAFETY, SUBJECT TO FUNDING AVAILABILITY.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration (“Administration”) recommends that the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) adopt the Resolution (Attachment A) pursuant to the recommendation of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (“PSNQLC” or “Committee”).

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the June 26, 2024 City Commission meeting, Commissioner Joseph Magazine sponsored a referral item (C4 AI) to the July 10, 2024 PSNQLC meeting to discuss and take action on increasing visibility for crosswalks in school zones to increase student safety.

In late 2023, the Transportation and Mobility Department completed a City of Miami Beach (“City”) School Zone Speed Study (“Traffic Study”) to evaluate the current vehicular speeds within seventeen (17) school zones associated with eight (8) schools in the City. Following is the list of schools evaluated in the Traffic Study:

1. South Pointe Elementary School
2. Miami Beach Feinberg Fisher K-8 Center
3. Miami Beach Senior High School
4. North Beach Elementary School
5. Miami Beach Nautilus Middle School
6. Biscayne Beach Elementary School
7. Mater Beach Academy
8. Hebrew Academy

As part of the Traffic Study, the study team assessed the existing conditions and physical characteristics of the striping and pavement markings within the 17 school zones evaluated, including pedestrian crosswalks. Based on the multiple field visits conducted, the study team identified that several crosswalk pavement markings were in poor condition and require restriping to enhance the safety of students crossing.

In January 2024, to improve pedestrian safety in the vicinity of Biscayne Beach Elementary School, the Transportation and Mobility Department completed the striping of a high emphasis (i.e. zebra) crosswalk, replaced faded school zone signs, and replaced the damaged delineators within the school zone.

ANALYSIS

It is important to note that while raised crosswalks are intended to elevate pedestrians to increase greater driver awareness and pedestrian safety, raised crosswalks also have the effect of reducing vehicle speeds similar to traffic calming devices. As such, approval from the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (“DTPW”) is required to install a raised pedestrian crosswalk. Pursuant to the “Miami-Dade County Traffic Flow Modification(s)/Street Closure(s) Procedure Manual”, raised crosswalks are evaluated by DTPW on a case-by-case basis, and to be eligible to implement a raised crosswalk, the street must not be located along an emergency response route, regional transit route, or school bus route.

The Transportation and Mobility Department is currently managing several projects intended to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists within school zones in the City, including, but not limited to:

1. Miami Beach Senior High School Pedestrian Enhancements Project

The scope of this “Safe Routes To School” project is to design and install upgraded crosswalks at the intersections of Meridian Avenue and Dade Boulevard, and Prairie Avenue/Convention Center Drive and Dade Boulevard adjacent to Miami Beach Senior High School. Design is underway and anticipated to be completed in early 2025. Construction is anticipated to begin by summer 2025, pending approval from the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”) and DTPW.

2. Miami Beach Senior High School Pick-up/Drop-off Lane

This project will construct a pick-up and drop-off lane along Dade Boulevard in front of Miami Beach Senior High School and upgrade the intersection of Washington Avenue and Dade Boulevard with high emphasis pedestrian crosswalks. Design is underway and anticipated to be completed in late 2024. Construction is anticipated to begin by summer 2025, pending DTPW approval.

3. South Beach Pedestrian Priority Zone

This project will construct raised crosswalks or enhanced crosswalks with high emphasis pavement markings, clear sidewalk paths, signage, and curb ramp improvements to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) standards at multiple intersections in the South of Fifth, Flamingo Park, and Entertainment District neighborhoods. Design is anticipated to begin in late 2024. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2025, pending FDOT and DTPW approval.

Transportation and Mobility Department staff will continue to explore opportunities to enhance school zones in the City through the installation of appropriate signage and enhanced crosswalks, as well as working with DTPW to upgrade school zone flashing beacons as necessary.

In preparation for the July 10, 2024 PSNQLC discussion on this item, Transportation and Mobility Department staff conducted multiple on-site assessments of the current condition of all existing pedestrian crosswalks within school zones in the City. Staff’s assessment included performing site visits, documenting observations, and taking photographs of all school zone crosswalks. Staff is in the process of preparing a report with the findings and recommendations of the assessment.

At the July 10, 2024 PSNQLC meeting, the Committee discussed this item and passed a motion recommending that the Administration move forward with increasing visibility for crosswalks in school zones to increase student safety and return to the September 11, 2024 City Commission meeting with a Resolution accepting the Committee’s recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The fiscal impact is yet to be determined.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The Transportation and Mobility Department is preparing a report with findings based on staff's recent condition survey of all existing pedestrian crosswalks in school zones within the City as well as recommendations on how to improve the safety and visibility of crosswalks.

Should the City Commission adopt this Resolution accepting the recommendation of the PSNQLC and directing the Administration to increase visibility for crosswalks in school zones to increase student safety, the Administration will proceed to formulate a work plan, based on staff's recent assessment survey, including identifying priority locations and a phasing plan, developing cost estimates for design and construction, obtaining regulatory approval by DTPW or FDOT as needed, and identifying any future funding needs. The Administration will provide updates on the status of the action plan via Letter to Commission ("LTC"). Should a funding allocation be required, the Administration will bring forward a request to the City Commission, as necessary.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

No

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s): N/A

Department

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Joseph Magazine

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Accept Recommendation, Increase Visibility for Crosswalks in School Zones. (Magazine) TR