

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: January 29, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE DYING TREE POPULATION IN NORTH BEACH OCEAN SIDE PARK

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration has committed to providing monthly updates on the G.O. Bond Reforestation Project activities to the Land Use and Sustainability Committee (LUSC) to ensure that the reforestation efforts align with sustainability goals and community expectations. Information regarding North Beach Oceanside Park trees has been and will continue to be provided in the LUSC memoranda.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

On November 20, 2024, at the request of Commissioners Rosen Gonzalez and Bhatt, the City Commission referred a discussion item (C4 Y) to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (Attachment A) for discussion on dying trees in North Beach Oceanside Park.

### **ANALYSIS**

The North Beach Oceanside Park renovation, including Beachwalk trees, was reviewed by City staff and found all trees healthy at the end of the 1-year warranty and project close-out. Since the project close-out, many newer Beachwalk trees have not experienced sustained growth as a reaction to the harsh environmental conditions. Many of these trees have either died or exhibit moderate to severe symptoms of decline.

Urban Forestry has been closely monitoring the dying tree population in North Beach Oceanside Park with the Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments.

The City has removed several dead trees and palms in the intervening years, including 38 trees recently in October 2024. As planned, the North Beach Beachwalk trees were evaluated for a second time in late November 2024. An additional 38 trees along the dunes side (east side) of the Beachwalk were identified as newly dead or having no chance of sustained survival. This evaluation also reviewed all trees on the North Beach Oceanside Park side (west side) of the Beachwalk and identified 13 additional dead trees and palms for removal. All 89 marked trees have been removed by City contractors.

According to the Urban Forestry Permit, 376 trees were either planted or relocated along the Beachwalk. Overall, the project's tree survival rate along the Beachwalk is 80% as we have lost 76 of the trees closest to the Beachwalk. This figure may not include additional trees planted and relocated as part of the overall Oceanside Park renovation.

The next scheduled North Beach tree evaluation will be at the end of the 2025 dry season (May-June) focusing on reviewing over 180 trees that are currently defoliated (at least 70% leaf loss) but with no other major stress symptoms or comorbidities. Many are expected to generate new leaf growth by the Spring and Summer months. Those trees that remain defoliated by May or June will be evaluated for their long-term sustainability. The trees exhibiting stress symptoms are primarily gumbo limbo and pigeon plum species. Seagrapes and silver buttonwoods appear to be faring well.

Staff observations particularly of the North Beach Oceanside Park trees include recommended planting strategies such as: 1) Using seagrapes and silver buttonwoods as primary reforestation trees. These two tree species appear unaffected by the harsh coastal environmental conditions. Additionally, these two trees could be used as barrier trees to block certain environmental conditions for other desirable tree species. 2) Grouping trees into small compact units to encourage trees to protect each other during the developmental years. 3) Install smaller trees initially as young trees generally adapt better to any new environment. 4) Longer watering and establishment periods for newly planted trees.

### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

### **Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?** (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

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 Urban Forestry Division in the Environment and Sustainability Department is committed to providing the scheduled North Beach Oceanside Park tree evaluation at the end of the 2025 dry season.

### **Applicable Area**

North Beach

<b><u>Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?</u></b>	<b><u>Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?</u></b>
Yes	Yes

### **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):

### **Department**

Environment and Sustainability

**Sponsor(s)**

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

**Co-sponsor(s)**

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

**Condensed Title**

Discuss take action on dying tree population in NoBe Ocean Side Park (Gonz/Bhatt) CM