

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager

DATE: June 28, 2024

TITLE: **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DOG BEACH ACCESS PROGRAM IN THE BUDGET PROCESS FOR THE 2025 FISCAL YEAR**

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

During the April 3, 2024 Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner David Suarez, the Mayor and City Commission referred a discussion (C7 Q) to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee ("FERC") to discuss the costs associated with the Dog Beach Access Program in the budget process for the 2025 Fiscal Year (Exhibit A).

This item was included on the May 24, 2024 FERC agenda but was not reached.

ANALYSIS

The attached resolution/referral includes directing the Administration to identify beach areas in South Beach, Mid Beach, and North Beach to be designated by the City Manager as dog-access beach areas daily from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on specified days (Dog Beach Access Program) in accordance with section 10-11(c) of the City Code; and further, directing the Administration to promulgate reasonable rules for the Dog Beach Access Program (Program); and further, directing the Administration to prepare a budget to provide for the posting of appropriate signage, the installation of pet waste stations and the provision of park ranger supervision at a cost not to exceed \$75,000 in the aggregate for the 2024 Fiscal Year.

The Administration recognizes the existing demand from dog owners for beach access for their pets. The Parks & Recreation and Environment & Sustainability Departments have been working collaboratively to identify locations that would be suitable for the expanded dog beach program. Some of the most important factors under consideration are identifying locations where dog owners are already known to frequent, areas without heavy concentrations of turtle nests, and sites that would generally or more easily comply with regulations from the Florida Department of Health. To that end, the following locations have been identified as the best possible options within South, Mid and North Beach, respectively: 21st Street, 53rd Street and 81st Street.

The North Beach site (Bark Beach) is an existing dog beach currently open on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (March through October: 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. and November through February: 1:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.). This proposal may expand hours to include the suggested morning hours.

Sea Turtles

It is important to prevent any negative impacts to sea turtles associated with the dog beach. Sea turtles are protected by the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Florida Statute Chapter 370. It is illegal to harm or harass sea turtles, their nests, or hatchlings. The City of Miami Beach is a nesting habitat for three species of protected sea turtles: the Loggerhead, Green, and

Leatherback. Sea turtle nesting season is from April 1 to October 31 for the City of Miami Beach. The Administration recommends the hours for the dog beach during this time be from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to allow the Miami-Dade County Sea Turtle Conservation Program nesting monitors to finish inspecting and clearing the beach daily. If County staff mark sea turtle nesting sites, it will be crucial for owners to ensure their dogs do not interfere with the nests.

Water Quality

Information with respect to human safety and water quality was provided by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH). While FDOH does not have the authority to prevent animals on marine beaches, the Healthy Beaches program office provided information. There is potential exposure to parasites and other diseases because of the presence of fecal matter from animals on beaches and anywhere humans and animals interact. FDOH provided a list of recommendations included as Attachment B. Considering these recommendations, it will be important for the City staff overseeing the dog beaches to require owners to clean-up the fecal material left by their animals, reducing the risk of disease.

Water quality is of critical importance to FDOH and the City of Miami Beach. Taking this into consideration, the initial new locations recommended by staff include 53rd Street (Mid Beach) and 21st Street (South Beach) as these sites are already part of the FDOH Healthy Beaches program (in addition to the existing 81st Street Bark Beach). The Administration has contacted FDOH for feedback about locations and the cost of adding water quality sampling at other locations but is awaiting a response.

Additional sites considered but not recommended include 5th, 10th, and 14th Streets as they have high sea turtle disorientations and an influx of dogs may further deter nesting habitats.

The costs associated with the expansion of the current program to the newly proposed areas include signage, dog waste disposal dispensers and bags, staffing, and water quality testing, as required by the State of Florida Department of Health. Below is an estimated cost breakdown.

The estimated Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget would be \$41,000 - If directed to begin in the current FY.

- Signage: \$1,500
- Waste bag dispensers and bags: \$5,000
- Water quality testing: See notes below regarding water quality testing.
- Park Ranger Coverage: \$11,390 per month (July through September \$34,170)
 - Staffing cost assumes the maximum possible cost as it is calculated using the overtime rate. However, whenever feasible, rangers will be assigned to the detail as part of their regular assignment without incurring overtime expenses.

Estimated Budget for FY 2025

- Park Ranger coverage: \$137,000 per year
 - Staffing cost assumes the maximum possible cost as it is calculated using the overtime rate. However, whenever feasible, rangers will be assigned to the detail as part of their regular assignment without incurring overtime expenses.
- Existing water quality testing: Existing sites are funded
 - Note the City is currently funding water quality testing for six (6) locations with the FDOH Healthy Beaches program, inclusive of the one (1) existing dog beach and two (2) potential dog beaches. If additional sampling is required by FDOH, additional costs may be incurred. The City is pending a response from FDOH with respect to staff capacity and estimates.
 - If alternate sites are identified for dog beaches that are not currently in the FDOH sampling program, additional funding will be needed.
 - Based on the current FDOH Healthy Beaches contract, adding another site is estimated at \$7,400 per location. Additional sampling costs are incurred when water quality standards are exceeded, and a 20% contingency has been included within the \$7,400. However, the City has not received an estimate from FDOH and is pending a response.

- Misc. Operating Costs - replacement signs, bags, etc. - \$3,000
- The estimated budget request for FY 2025 would be \$140,000 at a minimum.

Based on the above, the Administration is supportive of the proposed item, provided the associated required funds are allocated to the Parks & Recreation Department's budget for proper execution of the program (FY 2024 \$41,000 and/or FY 2025 \$140,000). This does not include additional water quality testing if required.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Based on the above, the Administration is supportive of the proposed item, provided the associated required funds are allocated to the Parks & Recreation Department's budget for proper execution of the program (FY 2024 \$41,000 and/or FY 2025 \$140,000). This does not include additional water quality testing if required.

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-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

This information is provided for discussion and recommendation on expanding/establishing the Dog Beach Access Program including the costs associated with the program for FY 2024 and/or FY 2025.

Applicable Area

Citywide

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

Yes

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):

Department

Parks and Recreation

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner David Suarez

Co-sponsor(s)