

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: March 19, 2025

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE, AT ITS JANUARY 16, 2025 MEETING, TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE USE OF THE MIDDLE TURN LANE AS A REVERSIBLE LANE ON 41ST STREET TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW DURING PEAK TRAFFIC HOURS, SUBJECT TO A FISCAL YEAR 2025 OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT, OR CONSIDERED AS A BUDGET ENHANCEMENT THROUGH THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET PROCESS.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration (“Administration”) recommends that the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) adopt the Resolution.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the June 26, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the City Commission referred an agenda item (C4 AE) to the Land Use and Sustainability Committee (“LUSC” or “Committee”) to discuss the use of the center turn lane as a reversible lane on 41 Street to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours.

State Road (“SR”) 112/41 Street is classified as a principal arterial with four (4) travel lanes (two (2) lanes eastbound and two (2) lanes westbound), and a dedicated center turn lane, primarily used for left turns. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”). The corridor is located in Mid Beach and provides direct access to/from I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway, a limited access federal facility, and SR A1A/Collins Avenue/Indian Creek Drive (also under FDOT’s jurisdiction).

The 41 Street corridor regularly experiences heavy traffic congestion during weekday afternoon peak hours and major special events in the City of Miami Beach (“City”). Several factors contribute to daily recurring traffic congestion along the corridor, including increased volumes due to drivers avoiding major ongoing construction and choke points on I-395/MacArthur Causeway, extensive school zones in the area, closely spaced traffic signals and high number of pedestrian crossings on 41 Street, and heavy side street traffic from the connecting north-south avenues which results in vehicles frequently blocking the 41 Street intersections and creating gridlock in all directions. Based on the FDOT 2022 Level of Service (“LOS”) map, the 41 Street corridor is and has been operating at LOS F (failing) based on the annual average daily traffic and capacity of the roadway.

At the January 16, 2025 LUSC meeting, the Committee discussed this item and recommended that the Administration proceed with conducting a traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of using the center turn lane as a reversible lane on 41 Street between Alton Road and Indian Creek Drive to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours.

ANALYSIS

Reversible lanes are a traffic management technique often used to improve traffic flow by changing the direction of travel lanes during a specified period of time to serve the direction with greater travel demand. Reversible lanes increase the directional capacity of a roadway during peak traffic periods. Reversible lanes on thoroughfares longer than two (2) miles with less than ten (10) traffic signals are encouraged and preferred. Reversible lanes can be used on a single center lane and are marked with a dashed doubled yellow line on both sides of the road with signs above to indicate which lanes are open or closed to vehicular traffic during a specific time of the day. A benefit of reversible lanes is to improve traffic flow without the need for additional infrastructure such as road widening. Reversible lanes tend to be commuter-oriented and primarily serve through vehicular traffic, de-emphasizing pedestrians and bicyclists and restricting left turn movements to limit access to/from adjacent land uses.

41 Street is a corridor with a large amount of pedestrian activity, nine (9) traffic signals, a school zone, on-street parking on both sides and multiple bus stops along the 3,115-foot roadway segment between Alton Road and Pine Tree Drive. In order to implement reversible lanes on 41 Street, a warrant analysis and feasibility study including data collection, traffic signal mast arm structural analysis, and community outreach are required to determine the feasibility of utilizing the center turn lane as a reversible lane to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours. It is important to note that the center turn lane of 41 Street is frequently used by emergency vehicles, including Fire Rescue, to more quickly access Mount Sinai Medical Center during periods of heavy traffic congestion. Furthermore, since 41 Street is under FDOT's jurisdiction, the traffic study will need to be reviewed and approved by both FDOT and Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) to ascertain feasibility and proceed with design and implementation.

Tangentially, the Administration is exploring various strategies to manage the increased vehicular demand on 41 Street and the north-south avenues connecting to 41 Street to help improve traffic flow in the immediate area, as well as to improve pedestrian safety, as further described below.

Creation of Dedicated Turn Lanes on the North-South Avenues

The Transportation and Mobility Department engaged Alta Planning & Design, Inc., one of the City's pre-qualified rotational transportation consultants, to conduct a comprehensive traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of creating dedicated turn lanes on the north-south avenues (from Chase Avenue on the west to Sheridan Avenue on the east) approaching 41 Street to more effectively facilitate vehicular turning movements from those avenues onto 41 Street as well crossing 41 Street (north/south). The traffic study includes the feasibility of adding dedicated turn lanes, if warranted, and the impacts, if any, to the existing bulb-outs at the intersections as well as a structural analysis of the traffic signal mast arms to ensure the mast arms can support new additional turning signal heads. The traffic study concluded that Chase Avenue, Prairie Avenue, Sheridan Avenue, and Royal Palm Avenue warrant the addition of dedicated left turn lanes in both the southbound and northbound directions at the 41 Street intersection.

41 Street Traffic Re-Circulation Pilot Program

In an effort to improve mobility for residents traveling north and south along Sheridan and Royal Palm avenues crossing 41 Street, on September 17, 2024, the City implemented the 41 Street Traffic Re-Circulation Pilot Program ("Pilot Program") during the weekday afternoon peak hours of 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Pilot Program, as approved via Resolution No. 2024-33116, maintains the existing two-way traffic flow on Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue. No left turns are allowed onto 41 Street from Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue during the pilot. Police resources are deployed at two (2) 41 Street intersections (Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue) to ensure vehicles do not make a left turn onto 41 Street and continue traveling north/south. A consultant was engaged to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Program and measure its impact on the surrounding street network. Based on field observations conducted by City staff and the Consultant, the Pilot Program is performing as intended, and northbound/southbound vehicles on both avenues are able to cross 41 Street during each traffic

signal cycle (i.e. no significant back-ups observed). At the February 26, 2025 City Commission meeting, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2025-33547 extending the Pilot Program for an additional six (6) months.

41 Street Corridor Revitalization General Obligation Bond (“GOB”) Project

The City’s Office of Capital Improvement Projects (“CIP”) is currently at 60% design phase for the 41 Street Corridor Revitalization GOB Project between Alton Road and Pine Tree Drive. The project focuses on enhancing walkability along the 41 Street corridor and proposes to widen the sidewalks, enhance the existing curb extensions (bulb-outs) with additional pedestrian crossing signage, and create bus pull-out bays in the eastbound and westbound directions along the corridor such that buses and trolleys do not stop and block travel lanes on 41 Street while boarding and alighting passengers.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The estimated cost for the 41 Street reversible lane feasibility study is approximately \$160,000. Funding has not been identified, budgeted or appropriated at this time in the Transportation and Mobility Department’s Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2025 Operating Budget.

Should the City Commission adopt a resolution accepting the recommendation of the LUSC, the Administration may seek a FY 2025 operating budget amendment or include the proposed feasibility study for funding consideration through the ongoing FY 2026 budget process.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate? Click or tap here to enter text.
(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-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

Reversible lanes are a traffic management technique often used to improve traffic flow by changing the direction of travel lanes during a specified period of time to serve the direction with greater travel demand. Reversible lanes increase the directional capacity of a roadway during peak traffic periods without the need to widen the road.

In order to implement reversible lanes on 41 Street, a warrant analysis and feasibility study including data collection, traffic signal mast arm structural analysis, and community outreach are required to determine the feasibility of utilizing the center turn lane as a reversible lane to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours. Given 41 Street is under FDOT’s jurisdiction, the traffic study will need to be reviewed and approved by both FDOT and DTPW to ascertain feasibility and proceed with design and implementation.

Should the City Commission adopt a resolution accepting the recommendation of the LUSC, at its January 16, 2025 meeting, the Transportation and Mobility Department is prepared to engage one of the City’s pre-qualified rotational transportation consultants, subject to City Commission approval for funding appropriation through a FY 2025 operating budget amendment or the FY 2026 budget process, to conduct a traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of using the center turn lane as a reversible lane on 41 Street between Alton Road and Indian Creek Drive.

Applicable Area

Middle Beach

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 Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Condensed Title

Accept Recommendation, Feasibility Study - Reversible Lanes on 41st Street.
(Fernandez/Bhatt) TR

Previous Action (For City Clerk Use Only)