

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: January 24, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS AMENDING PARKING FEES TO PROVIDE FREE PARKING FOR CONSTITUENTS MEETING WITH THE MAYOR AND COMMISSION OFFICE AT CITY HALL.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The City Administration (“Administration”) recommends that the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (“FERC” or “Committee”) discuss and consider the option provided herein as a feasible alternative to providing free parking at the City Hall parking garage given free parking is not permitted according to certain covenants set forth in the City of Miami Beach (“City”) parking bonds.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

On November 20, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) referred Item C4 J to the FERC, to discuss the possibility of the City amending parking fees to provide free parking at the City Hall parking garage for constituents attending meetings or conducting business with members of the Office of the Mayor and City Commission at City Hall, including Committee meetings and publicly noticed meetings.

The City is committed to enhancing community engagement and facilitating constituents’ interaction with the Office of the Mayor and City Commission. However, the item sponsor has expressed a concern regarding the current parking fee at the City Hall parking garage as it may present a potential barrier, especially for those constituents facing financial hardship.

Currently, the City offers a free, convenient, and reliable trolley service for residents and visitors alike. Operating citywide from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven (7) days a week, the trolley service connects key areas of the City with an average service frequency of approximately 20 minutes on each route. For those visiting City Hall, the South Beach Trolley Loops A and B and the Mid Beach Trolley Loop provide nearby stops, with the closest stop located at 17 Street and Convention Center Drive. To further enhance accessibility, the trolley service is complemented by Freebee, a free on-demand transit service. This first-and-last-mile solution operates in areas not served by the Miami Beach Trolley or Miami-Dade County bus routes, ensuring comprehensive transportation coverage throughout the City.

At the December 20, 2024 FERC meeting, this item was not reached.

### **ANALYSIS**

The existing parking fee at the City Hall parking garage with the resident rate discount is \$1 per hour, seven (7) days a week. It is worth noting that the regular rate for non-residents to park in any parking garage in the City is \$2 per hour, thus, residents currently receive a 50% discount to park.

While providing free parking for residents attending meetings with members of the Office of the Mayor and City Commission or attending Committee and publicly noticed meetings would make these civic engagements more accessible, it is important to note the financial and legal issues that arise with such a proposal. The City is currently under the obligation of certain parking bonds issued to fund parking projects. These bonds contain covenants that prohibit the provision of free parking, except for members of the City Commission, and officers and employees of the City while conducting official City business.

In preparation for this discussion item, the Administration sought legal counsel to assess the feasibility of offering free parking to residents attending meetings in City Hall. **The City's bond counsel has advised that no free parking can be provided under any circumstances, due to the restrictions placed by the bond covenants.**

As such, the Administration is proposing an alternative approach that would support enhanced parking accessibility at the City Hall parking garage for constituents without violating the terms of the City's bond covenants:

- **Fully or Partially Subsidize Parking:** The Office of the Mayor and City Commission could potentially subsidize, either wholly or partially or capped at a certain duration, the cost of parking at the current resident rate of \$1 per hour, ensuring that constituents would not bear the full cost of parking while still allowing the City to meet its bond obligations.

The above option, in addition to the current free Miami Beach Trolley and Freebee services, presents a feasible alternative to providing free parking, while maintaining fiscal responsibility and facilitating constituents' access to the City Hall parking garage. The Administration believes that implementing this option will allow the City to continue its efforts to enhance public engagement and ensure that all residents can participate in local governance without undue financial strain.

### **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**

While providing free parking for constituents at the City Hall parking garage is not a feasible option due to the legal and financial constraints associated with the City's parking bonds, the Administration has identified a potential alternative that can enhance parking accessibility for constituents. In addition to the current Miami Beach Trolley and Freebee services, the option of subsidizing parking, either fully or partially or capped at a certain duration, ensures that the City

remains fiscally responsible while meeting the intended goal of enhancing residents' ability to participate in meetings with members of the Office of the Mayor and City Commission as well as Committee and publicly noticed meetings.

The Administration believes that the alternative option presented above reflects the City's ongoing commitment to fostering greater community involvement in local governance and making the community engagement process more inclusive.

**Applicable Area**

South Beach

**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**

Parking

**Sponsor(s)**

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

**Co-sponsor(s)**

**Condensed Title**

DISCUSS AMENDING PARKING FEES TO PROVIDE FREE PARKING FOR CONSTITUENTS AT THE CITY HALL GARAGE. (Fernandez) PK