

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: September 18, 2024

TITLE: DISCUSS A RESOLUTION TO EXPLORE THE VIABILITY OF CREATING POLICE SUBSTATIONS, SIMILAR TO THE POLICE SUBSTATION IN NORTH BEACH, IN THE COLLINS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD, AT CITY HALL, IN THE SOUTH OF FIFTH NEIGHBORHOOD, AND IN MID-BEACH, IN ORDER TO MAKE LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES AND INCIDENT REPORTING MORE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND READILY AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, AND TO MORE EFFICIENTLY ADDRESS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND FURTHER, DIRECTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO REPORT THEIR FINDINGS AND PROPOSALS TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE AT ITS JULY 10, 2024 MEETING IN ORDER FOR THE COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING THE FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPACT) TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION IN ADVANCE OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET PROCESS.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission discuss this item to identify their expected outcome and goals for this police substation expansion project. The discussion should include stakeholder input to identify alternative strategies that accomplish the same or similar outcomes, without the adverse impacts to the Miami Beach Police Department's (MBPD) current staffing capabilities and other ongoing initiatives previously identified as high priorities by our residents, elected officials and MBPD leadership.

Through this collaborative approach, strategies may be developed that achieve the same outcomes through public/private partnerships with minimal impacts on taxpayers, while expanding MBPD's neighborhood presence throughout the City. This can be achieved without opening multiple police substations by opting to identify locations for Neighborhood Engagement Offices or Police Field Workstations.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the May 15, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral (C7 AK) to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC") to report the findings and proposals related to the viability of creating police substations.

The item was heard at the July 10, 2024 meeting and slated to return to the September 18, 2024 PSNQLC meeting to provide an update with possible plan phased out in fiscal years and including the possibility of substations in the City owned property in Altos del Mar, and partnering with Miami Dade County Schools.

ANALYSIS

The MBPD currently has one police substation in North Beach that provides limited in-person services for walk-in reporting during business hours. The remainder of the facility serves as a police briefing facility for NoBe police roll calls and houses police offices for the Area Captain, NRO, Beat Officers and a Boston Whaler Marine Patrol Vessel. Apart from the units assigned to NoBe, all MBPD personnel are deployed from the main headquarters building located at 1100 Washington Avenue. This location is staffed 24 hours a day to provide full-service, in-person reporting capabilities. Deploying personnel are briefed during shift roll calls throughout the 24-hour shift cycle and full investigative services are available at the MBPD headquarters. The Department also has the capability and routinely takes reports from residents and visitors via telephone and through the online reporting system Desk Officer Reporting System (DORS). The DORS system allows the public to create police reports for certain enumerated minor crimes and be issued a police case number.

The Department is always looking to expanding its technological capabilities to interface with the community and improve service delivery by employing cutting-edge technology. This would allow officers to interface with residents/complainants on certain calls using video conferencing features present in most smart devices. This technological expansion would not require the Department to identify or purchase/lease brick and mortar facilities and could be achievable utilizing much of the hardware and equipment the department already possesses.

MBPD prides itself on its community policing and engagement activities, which are spearheaded by the efforts of the MBPD Community Affairs Unit, Area Captains, and Neighborhood Resource Officers. The Department is consistently exploring new opportunities to increase community engagement and collaboration.

The establishment of a police substation owned or leased by MBPD would need to be compliant with the standards of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). These standards include criteria for the safety and security of employees, the public and protocols for securing sensitive, law enforcement-only information and access to databases. Compliance with these accreditation standards, industry best practices and the desired outcome of opening a facility that allows access to the public are all important considerations for the identification and selection of a suitable location. Interfacing with the public in a police station also often involves police personnel receiving found, or stolen property/evidence brought into the facility by a complainant or concerned citizen. These found items at times include firearms, ammunition and drugs/narcotics. The temporary storage of these items prior to being impounded to the MBPD headquarters is also governed by accreditation standards and must also be considered as it will influence location selection, design and costs.

During the July PSNQLC, several potential locations were discussed, and the Administration has performed its due diligence in evaluating the feasibility of these locations and estimating the associated costs when one of those potential locations was explored further.

Collins Park Artists Workforce Housing (first floor lease)

- This location would not be a viable space for a police substation based on the aforementioned required standards.
- This would be an excellent location to host police/community events and meetings periodically.

City Hall continues to be considered as a potential satellite location and will be further explored alongside all other viable options. In addition to defining the scope of and specific services provided at the location, allocated funding would also be needed to design the designated space.

The Administration inquired with City Facilities as to the availability of other potentially viable, City-owned facilities and the Department is unaware of any at this time.

Additionally, the Administration was asked to explore the possibility of co-locating a police substation within Miami-Dade County Public School Facilities in its jurisdiction to enhance school safety. It should be noted that MBPD is one of the few law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County that continues to have municipal officers assigned as School Liaison Officers at local schools that are staffed by Miami-Dade County School Police Officers. Making schools within Miami Beach among the safest and most well-staffed in the County.

After analyzing this suggestion further, it would not be recommended to establish this type of public facing police facility within a school based on the services police substations provide to the general public. For student and faculty safety, schools are limited-access facilities open only to students, faculty, staff and parents or visitors on official business and only with authorization. Placing a public substation within a school would expand that access to the general public needing police services, which could have unintended adverse effects. For example, out of state registered sex offenders are required to register/report to the nearest local police facility when they are staying temporarily in that jurisdiction to meet registration requirements. A substation within a school would potentially create an unintended situation where one of these individuals would have a legitimate reason to enter an occupied school facility for this legitimate legal purpose.

Staffing Considerations

The MBPD is currently budgeted for a total of 437 sworn officer positions of which 405 positions are filled. This filled position number includes all Police Officer Trainees (in the police academy), Police Officers, Detectives, Sergeants, Lieutenants and Command Staff personnel in the Department. To staff multiple substations, MBPD would be obligated to assign appropriate personnel to these facilities to provide initial contact and public safety services for multiple shifts throughout the workday and week. This would require a minimum of four (4) to six (6) Officers/Public Safety Specialists at each facility to provide coverage from early morning and into the late evening and allow for breaks and days off. When those staffing requirements are expanded to multiple facilities as suggested during committee discussions, the MBPD may need up to 16 to 24 additional Police Officers or Public Safety Specialists (PSS) to successfully carryout this initiative and provide the level of services the community has grown to expect.

The MBPD does not currently have unassigned available sworn or professional staff to assign to work in substations throughout the city. If the decision is made to move forward with this project, MBPD would need to reassign existing staff from their current assignments or scale back commitments to expand specialized police services in other areas, to make staff available for this purpose. It is important to consider that removing police officers from the field to place them within substations would likely have an adverse impact on police visibility.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Costs for purchasing or leasing a viable property or properties are undetermined, must be explored further.

Construction costs to meet CMB codes and compliance with CALEA standards are undetermined as this would vary based on the identified location and the construction needs to achieve the goals.

Costs to staff the locations and provide basic needed equipment for personnel is undetermined

- An estimated cost for adding three (3) police officers, three (3) PSSs and one (1) Office Assistant IV to staff one location would be approximately \$1.3 million dollars in salary, benefits and equipment.
- These costs would be compounded based on the number of substations opened.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission discuss this item to identify their expected outcome and goals for this police substation expansion project. The discussion should include stakeholder input to identify alternative strategies that accomplish the same or similar outcomes, without the adverse impacts to the Miami Beach Police Department’s current staffing capabilities and other ongoing initiatives previously identified as high priorities by residents, elected officials and Miami Beach Police Department leadership.

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):

Department

Police

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss the Viability of Creating Police Substations