

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: January 24, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS BEAUTIFYING WASHINGTON AVENUE BY ENHANCING LIGHTING AND STREETSCAPING ON WASHINGTON AVENUE.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends replacing the sidewalks and pedestrian light fixtures along Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street, utilizing General Obligation (G.O.) Bond funding and incorporating input from the Washington Avenue Business Improvement District (BID).

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

On June 26, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez, co-sponsored by Commissioners Joseph Magazine, David Suarez, Alex Fernandez, and Tanya Bhatt, the Mayor and City Commission (City Commission) approved referral item C4C (Attachment A), to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (FERC) meeting, to discuss beautifying Washington Avenue by enhancing lighting and streetscaping.

There had been similar requests brought up for discussion by City Commission members at the Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) and FERC to enhance lighting on South Beach, however, neither request turned into favorable recommendations to the City Commission for approval, due to costs for installation and maintenance exceeding \$1 Million.

On September 20, 2024, FERC members were provided sidewalk and lighting updates along Washington Avenue. Public Works presented two proposals for wrap lights on median trees for the east and west sidewalks, including maintenance costs for a period of one year after installation. The breakdown for these costs were:

- Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street (median trees): \$272,532
- Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street (east and west sidewalks): \$1,195,950

Public Works reiterated at Committee that funding for the proposed wrap lights had yet to be identified. There was also a discussion about the \$10 Million G.O. Bond fund as part of the Washington Avenue Corridor Project. Said funding, once allocated, would be used to invest in capital improvements, permanent lighting and landscaping along Washington Avenue as a way to increase vibrancy and business retention through the construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, community programming, and marketing. Wrap lights, however, since considered temporary fixtures, would not be eligible for G.O. Bond funding.

Discussions at Committee continued, focusing on how to reenergize Washington Avenue short and long term, using G.O. Bond funds. There were discussions regarding the need to have the Washington Avenue BID be involved in these efforts along with the city. FERC members made

a favorable recommendation to move the item to the October 30, 2024, City Commission meeting for approval to proceed with the installation of wrap lights on median trees on Washington Avenue, from 5th Street to 17th Street, in the approximate amount of \$273,000. FERC members also requested for the Administration to come back to the November 8, 2024, FERC meeting to provide cost estimates for sidewalk repairs/replacement and cost for the replacement of lighting fixtures along Washington Avenue.

The total estimated cost for in-kind replacement of sidewalk and light fixtures is approximately \$1,537,000, to be funded through the G.O. Bond.

On November 8, 2024, FERC members discussed the estimated cost for replacing the sidewalk and lighting fixtures. Committee members expressed a desire to upgrade the materials that would be used for the sidewalks, since there was enough money funded under the G.O. Bond. Direction was given to have staff return to the January 24, 2025, FERC meeting, with an updated cost and plan including upgrading sidewalk materials.

ANALYSIS

The Administration obtained additional estimates from several contractors for alternative sidewalk improvements along Washington Avenue between 5th and 17th streets. These included additional areas, as well as improvements to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance and other factors not previously included. Three options were considered: the typical Miami Beach Red concrete, Exposed Shell Specialty concrete and Stamped Specialty sidewalks.

The estimated costs for these improvements are as follows:

- Miami Beach red: \$1,500,000
- Exposed Shell Specialty concrete: \$1,983,000
- Stamped Specialty sidewalks: \$1,693,500

The cost to replace the Pedestrian Light Fixtures remains at an estimated: \$650,000 (LED, 4K Acorn light fixtures).

PROS AND CONS

Regular Concrete Sidewalk

Pros:

- Affordable:
 - Generally the most cost-effective option.
- Smooth Surface:
 - Even and uniform, making it accessible for all users (e.g., wheelchairs, strollers).
- Neutral Look:
 - Versatile and blends well with most settings. Can be stained or painted for customization.
- Low Maintenance:
 - Easy to clean and doesn't require much upkeep beyond sealing (if necessary).

Cons:

- Plain Appearance:
 - Lacks decorative or aesthetic appeal unless enhanced with finishes or colors.
- Slippery When Wet:
 - Smooth surfaces may become slick without anti-slip treatments.
- Prone to Cracking:
 - Susceptible to cracks over time due to ground movement or weathering.
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Exposed Shell Concrete Sidewalk

Pros:

- Aesthetic Appeal:
 - Features embedded shells for a natural, decorative, and coastal-inspired look.
- Durability:
 - The embedded shells can increase surface hardness and resilience.
- Slip Resistance:
 - Textured surface provides good traction, especially in wet conditions.
- Unique Appearance:
 - No two installations are identical due to the variation in shell patterns.
- Eco-Friendly:
 - Often uses reclaimed or recycled shells, which is environmentally friendly.

Cons:

- Higher Cost:
 - Typically more expensive due to materials and specialized labor.
- Rough Texture:
 - Less comfortable for bare feet compared to smooth surfaces.
- Maintenance:
 - Dirt and debris can accumulate in textured areas, requiring regular cleaning.
- Repair Challenges:
 - Matching the shell pattern during repairs can be difficult, making patches visible.

Stamped Concrete Sidewalk

Pros:

- Customizable Designs:
 - Can mimic the appearance of stone, brick, tile, or wood, offering a high-end look.
- Wide Range of Colors:
 - Can be stained or dyed to achieve nearly any color scheme.
- Durability:
 - Resistant to wear and tear when properly sealed.
- Slip Resistance:
 - Can include anti-slip additives to improve safety.
- Increased Property Value:
 - Enhances curb appeal and can make the property more attractive.

Cons:

- Cost:
 - More expensive than regular concrete, though usually less than exposed shell concrete.
- Maintenance:
 - Requires regular resealing to maintain its appearance and prevent damage.
- Risk of Cracking:
 - Like regular concrete, stamped concrete is prone to cracking; cracks are harder to repair without visible seams.
- Skilled Labor Needed:
 - Installation requires experienced contractors to achieve the desired pattern and finish.
- Slippery When Wet:
 - Without anti-slip treatments, stamped concrete can also become slick in wet conditions.

COMPARISON SUMMARY

Feature	Regular Concrete	Exposed Shell Concrete	Stamped Concrete
Cost	Low	High	Medium-High
Aesthetic Appeal	Basic	Unique, Coastal Look	Highly Customizable
Durability	Moderate	High	High
Slip Resistance	Low (without treatment)	High	Moderate-High (with sealers)
Maintenance	Low	Moderate-High	Moderate (requires resealing)
Repair Difficulty	Easy	Difficult	Moderate

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The total fiscal impact will be determined once a decision has been made for the sidewalk material and application type.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends replacing the sidewalks and pedestrian light fixtures along Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street, utilizing G.O. Bond funding and incorporating input from the Washington Avenue BID.

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?

Yes

Department

Public Works

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Joseph Magazine
Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt
Commissioner Alex Fernandez
Commissioner David Suarez

Condensed Title

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