

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: February 20, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS REPLACING THE DRAWBRIDGE AT 63RD STREET WITH A FLYOVER TO ELEVATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration ("Administration") recommends the Land Use and Sustainability Committee ("LUSC" or "Committee") discuss this item and provide feedback. Additionally, the Administration recommends conducting a traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of replacing the drawbridge with a flyover to elevate traffic congestion.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the December 11, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Vice-Mayor Tanya K. Bhatt, the Mayor and City Commission ("City Commission") referred an agenda item (C4 L) to the LUSC to discuss replacing the drawbridge at 63 Street with a flyover to elevate traffic congestion.

The 63 Street Bridge ("Bridge") is a double-leaf bascule bridge with an 11-foot vertical clearance. The Bridge opening causes severe traffic congestion in the area on a regular basis, with no relief for area residents and visitors. Although located within the City's geographic boundary, the Bridge is owned and maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") which manages a contract with a third-party provider for bridge tender services.

In January 1999, 63 Bridge was a drawbridge with a grade-separated flyover structure carries eastbound traffic from 63rd Street to northbound Indian Creek Drive. FDOT completed an analysis and recommendation report titled 63 Street at Indian Creek Drive Intersection, Final Preliminary Analysis, Evaluation, and Recommendation Report (Attachment A) is to examine current and future travel conditions and propose solutions which would reduce safety concerns and restore more acceptable Level of Service (LOS) conditions. Several options were considered for this intersection, including a No-build Option and two build alternatives. The build alternatives included: Alternative 1, an at-grade intersection; and Alternative 2, replacement of the existing flyover structure with a new flyover to provide fourteen (14) feet of vertical clearance. The only significant constraint adhered to throughout the alternatives analysis was that no appreciable right-of-way acquisition would be allowed. The recommended alternative was Alternative 1, it provided a better LOS which removed the existing flyover structure and constructed an at-grade intersection. The improvements allowed for three left-turn lanes for traffic traveling eastbound on 63rd Street to turn to northbound Indian Creek Drive. Southbound, two right-turn lanes on Indian Creek Drive remained free flow.

In March 1999, FDOT completed a Final Supplemental Report to analyze the pedestrian access and landscaping options on 63 Street and Indian Creek (Attachment B) after the proposed improvements in the recommendation report to demolish the flyover and build an at-grade intersection (Attachment A). Based upon in-depth review of operational features, landscaping opportunities, and enhanced pedestrian access. Alternative 1A is recommended for construction. This alternative will improve the LOS provided at the intersection, provide greater landscaping opportunities than any of the alternatives under review, and improve pedestrian access to Brittany

Bay Park. This alternative will require right-of-way from Brittany Bay Park which would require preparation of a Determination of Applicability (DOA) for potential Section 4(f) lands should Federal aid be sought. If it is determined that right-of-way would not be available from Brittany Bay Park, then Alternative 1A should be constructed. This would provide most of the benefits found in Alternative 1B with a reduction in the opportunity for landscaping.

In May 1999, FDOT completed a technical memorandum for the Capacity Computation and NETSIM Analysis to develop capacity estimates for the eastbound left turn movements at 63 Street and Indian Creek Drive for three alternative traffic operating conditions and an animation model using TRAF-NETSIM. (Attachment C) The three alternative operating conditions are as follows: Existing Flyover; New Flyover; At-grade, Triple-Left-Turn Lanes. The three alternative operating conditions are described in detail in the FDOT report titled 63 Street at Indian Creek Drive Intersection, Final Preliminary Analysis, Evaluation, and Recommendation Report, January 29, 1999 (Attachment A).

In April 2000, FDOT completed a traffic study which recommended the removal of the flyover on Indian Creek and replace with at-grade intersection with three eastbound left turn lanes (Attachment D). The flyover was recommended to be removed since it didn't satisfy FDOT design standards, which contributed to operation problems. In particular, the flyover's low vertical clearance prevented high vehicles from traversing beneath it. Alternative 1 from the 63 Street at Indian Creek Drive Intersection, Final Preliminary Analysis, Evaluation, and Recommendation Report, January 29, 1999 (Attachment A), which is the construction of an at-grade intersection with triple eastbound left-turning lanes, was recommended as the preferred improvement strategy over the construction of a new flyover satisfying current design standards and the no-build option.

On March 27, 2023, the Mayor and City Commission passed adopted Resolution No. 2023-32538, requesting the Administration conduct a study relating to the feasibility of a potential flyover project at 63 Street and Indian Creek, to allow the City Commission to determine whether to urge FDOT to develop and approve a new flyover project, in an effort to ease traffic congestion in the area.

In May 2024, the Transportation and Mobility Department completed a traffic operation analysis for the Bridge to propose the modification of the opening schedule that is regulated by the United States Coast Guard ("USCG") and reduce the drawbridge opening to ease the traffic congestion. In December 2024, the USCG reviewed and denied the request to change the drawbridge operation hours. The Transportation and Mobility Department is currently working on the appeal to the USCG District Commander's decision.

ANALYSIS

The Transportation and Mobility Department reached out to one of the City's pre-qualified rotational transportation consultants to prepare a scope and fee estimate to conduct a comprehensive traffic study and evaluate the feasibility of replacing the Bridge with a flyover. The scope includes preparation of concept plans and estimates for design and construction costs.

In order to replace the Bridge with a flyover, the Bridge height should meet a certain height for the majority of the boats to pass through. The flyover bridge will have major effects on existing structures and Allison Island, requires major environmental clearances, and multiple conflicts with existing utilities.

The estimated timeline to complete the traffic study is twelve (12) months due to the various required coordination meetings with FDOT and the USCG.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

At this time, funding for the comprehensive traffic study to replace the 63 Street drawbridge with a flyover has not been identified or budgeted in the Transportation and Mobility Department's

Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget. Should the LUSC recommend that the Administration move forward and conduct a traffic study to explore the feasibility of the replacement of the Bridge with a flyover, it may be prudent for the City Commission to prioritize this initiative within the Fiscal Year 2026 budget development process.

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

The cost estimate for a comprehensive traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of replacing the Bridge with a flyover is approximately \$635,450.00

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends conducting a comprehensive traffic study, to be reviewed and approved by FDOT, USCG, and the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) to evaluate the feasibility of replacing the 63 Street Drawbridge with a flyover to ease traffic congestion. It is recommended that the traffic study be prioritized during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget development process.

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

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Co-sponsor(s)

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Condensed Title

Replace 63 Street Drawbridge with a Flyover to Elevate Traffic Congestion