

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members
FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager
DATE: May 14, 2025
TITLE: DISCUSS A LONG-TERM PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN FOR THE BAYWALK.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends enhancing security measures throughout the City of Miami Beach's Baywalk by considering a long-term plan incorporating at least one if not a combination of the various options presented herein.

The Administration recommends that while the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee evaluates a Baywalk safety plan, it also carefully considers several critical factors that will significantly impact the General Fund budget, beginning in FY 2026:

1. The City's increasing unfunded capital improvement program
2. Long-term General Fund financial projections indicating a potential shortfall in upcoming fiscal years
3. The passage of Amendment 5 in November 2024, which increases the homestead exemption and further constrains the growth of taxable property values

These considerations are essential to ensure that decisions regarding the Baywalk safety plan align with the City's broader long-term financial stability and strategic priorities. If the Committee recommends funding a plan, the Administration recommends it be considered as part of the FY 2026 budget process.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the February 3, 2025 City Commission Meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez and subsequently co-sponsored by Commissioner Laura Dominguez, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral (C4 G) to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC") to discuss a long-term public safety plan for the Baywalk.

ANALYSIS

The Miami Beach Baywalk once complete will connect with the Beachwalk to form a continuous waterfront amenity for the use of residents and the City's many visitors. The Beachwalk runs along the Atlantic Ocean while the Baywalk will be parallel to Biscayne Bay and cover the bay's edge from 5th Street through Dade Boulevard.

To ensure the safety and comfort of residents and visitors alike, the Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) has considered various options to safeguard that laws and rules are followed. The existing Baywalk hours of operation are currently from sunrise to sunset. Under the assumption that the hours of operation will remain the same throughout the entirety of the Baywalk, four (4) recommendations to consider are delineated below.

Option #1 – Assigned Police Personnel

Staff the affected area with beat officers. This would entail two (2) officers working from 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. with opposite days off to mirror other beat officers in different areas. Their area of responsibility (AOR) would be comprised of the entire neighborhood to include the Baywalk and all parklets. The beat officers would be expected to patrol on foot, bicycle, and vehicle as needed. With individual condo security guards and/or employees monitoring the area behind their property and call police as needed once the Baywalk closes at sunset.

Currently the Baywalk has metal gates dividing each condos' property line, all of which are closed after sunset. It is recommended to keep the existing gates and add new ones to cover the rest of the property lines. Condos and/or building representatives would ultimately be responsible for locking and unlocking these gates daily.

Each Parklet should have proper lighting and City cameras to monitor the area remotely 24/7. Lighting considerations by the City are also recommended for the entirety of the Baywalk.

Option #2 – Security Company Engagement

Engage a private security company to patrol the Baywalk and Parklets. Two (2) security guards would be needed to work while the Baywalk is open, seven (7) days a week.

Option #3 – Park Ranger Personnel

Engage two (2) Park Rangers seven (7) days per week from 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. The Park Rangers would be responsible for patrolling the Baywalk and parklets as well as for locking and unlocking the gates as necessary.

Option #4 – Existing Resources

Assign existing police, Park Ranger and Code Compliance resources to include the Baywalk in their existing roving patrols.

Regardless of the options considered, staffing this area with appropriate personnel is needed to ensure the quality of life is not affected by unwanted and illegal activity. Police and private personnel assigned would be expected to take appropriate action for any loitering, narcotics use, alcohol consumption, fishing, illegal boat docking and camping observed. Additionally, since the Baywalk is a pedestrian-only area, bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and any micromobility devices would not be allowed. Having an officer, security guard, and/or Park Ranger assigned to this area would provide an almost immediate response time, ensuring calls for service are handled in a more efficient manner and alleviating resources that would potentially have to respond from the opposite side of the zone.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Estimated annual costs for each option are broken down as follows:

- Option #1 – two (2) officers with one overlap day: **\$144,504.88**
- Option #2 – two (2) security guards daily: **\$136,247**
- Option #3 – two (2) Park Rangers daily: **\$115,673**
- Option #4 – no identified fiscal impact

Additional costs to consider:

- signage throughout the Baywalk and each parklet entrance as designed by the City to highlight hours of operation, no trespassing, and the ordinance violation (Section 70-69)
- City cameras throughout public spaces, with an optional but highly recommended suggestion for private property owners to install their own cameras
- lighting enhancements (both public and private)

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission consider and provide further guidance on the proposed options to enhance security measures for the safety and enjoyment of residents and visitors to the Baywalk and surrounding areas.

Applicable Area

South 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):

Department

Police

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Laura Dominguez

Condensed Title

Baywalk Public Safety Plan.