

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: November 6, 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

After consideration of all the potential options for a police substation, the Administration recommends further exploring the acquisition of a Mobile Police Substation (MPS) through which to satisfy the requirements for law enforcement resources, incident reporting, high visibility and crime deterrence equally throughout the various Miami Beach neighborhoods.

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.

This item was heard at the September 18th PSNQLC meeting, and the item is slated to return to the October PSNQLC meeting. The Police Department was asked to return with three (3) possibilities with cost and resources needed to be included for the following locations: 1. City Hall 2. Collins Park Area 3. A Mobile Station.

ANALYSIS

The Miami Beach Police Department (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 North Beach police roll calls and

houses offices for the Area Captain, Neighborhood Resource Officer (NRO), Beat Officers and the PD's Boston Whaler Marine Patrol Vessel.

With the exception of the units assigned to North Beach, all MBPD personnel are deployed from the main HQ building located at 1100 Washington Ave. 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 as well.

MBPD additionally has the capability and routinely takes reports from residents and visitors via telephone and through an online reporting system called *Desk Officer Reporting System* (DORS). The DORS system allows the public to create police reports for certain enumerated minor crimes and be issued a MBPD case number.

MBPD prides itself on its Community Policing and engagement activities, spearheaded by the efforts of the Department's Community Affairs Unit, Area Captains, and NROs. In addition to the traditional brick-and-mortar customer service approach, the Department is open to expanding its technological capabilities to interface with the community and improve service delivery through 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, purchase/lease physical facilities and could be achievable utilizing much of the hardware and equipment the department already possesses.

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 the 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 for consideration. Interfacing with the public in a police station also oftentimes 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 be considered as it will influence location selection, design and costs.

During the July PSNQLC, several potential locations were discussed and tasked for follow up. The Administration has performed its due diligence in evaluating the feasibility of these locations and estimating the associated costs as effectively as possible with the time allotted.

- **Collins Park Artists Workforce Housing** (first floor lease)
 - While this facility presents an excellent location to host police/community events and meetings periodically, it does not meet the necessary minimum CALEA and evidentiary standards.
 - As of the writing of this memo, no viable location within the Collins Park Neighborhood for a traditional police substation has been identified.
 - Locations being further evaluated for feasibility of establishing a police field workstation or community engagement office are as follows:
 - Miami City Ballet: 2200 Liberty Ave, Miami Beach, FL 33139
 - Miami Beach Regional Library: 227 22nd St, Miami Beach, FL 33139
 - Collins Park Artist Workforce Housing: 224 23rd St, Miami Beach, FL 33139
- **210 2nd Street**

- This City-owned building offers the potential to be converted into a police substation. It is a free-standing building adjacent to a dog park with walk-up access from the sidewalk.
 - The interior space under air conditioning is approximately 200 square feet.
 - There is a screened patio that measures 540 square feet. This space would need to be enclosed and converted to interior space for this facility to be a viable substation.
 - In August of 2023, the Administration obtained a cost estimate from the City Facilities Management Division for the simple enclosure of the screened patio area of the facility to utilize as a neighborhood outreach office. The costs associated with enclosing this space were estimated between \$280,000-\$380,000.
 - This rough cost estimate does not include the development of design plans and scope of work.
 - Due to a lack of budgetary funding availability to move forward with this project, the space is currently being utilized as office space for an investigative unit which also deters break-ins which had been occurring while this location was unoccupied.
 - The costs of converting this facility to a police substation would likely be considerably higher to meet the minimum required police standards.
- **City Hall (1700 Convention Center Drive)**
 - The space readily available to the Department is the Finance Conference room within City Hall's 3rd floor.
 - This space is approximately 250-300 SF. It is estimated that it will cost approximately \$10k to bring this space up to a usable condition.
 - This space lacks the sufficient size to meet the accreditation standards of a police substation, however, it would be sufficient to open a police satellite office offering limited services during the same business hours as City Hall.
 - Alternatively, the office space between the elevators on the first floor of City Hall would be ideal for a police substation, however, it is currently occupied by the Education & Performance Initiatives department

- **Mobile Police Substation (MPS)**

During discussions on this item, the idea of purchasing a specialized vehicle to serve as a Mobile Police Substation (MPS) was introduced. The Administration contacted a vendor to inquire about the associated costs. Several advantages of this MPS option were identified, particularly when compared to leasing or purchasing a fixed brick-and-mortar facility:

- **Lower Cost:** The cost of purchasing and maintaining a mobile unit is significantly lower than the expenses associated with acquiring, leasing, or maintaining a permanent, physical structure. The MPS eliminates the need for long-term property leases, construction, renovation costs, and utility expenses tied to a fixed location, offering a more budget-friendly solution.
- **Citywide Flexibility and Visibility:** Unlike a stationary location, the MPS offers the unique ability to be deployed across various neighborhoods, increasing police presence and visibility throughout the entire city. This versatility allows the MPS to act as a proactive deterrent in high-crime areas, provide a temporary police presence at community events, or assist in ongoing investigations by positioning close to active incidents or concerns.
- **Rapid Relocation and Targeted Deployment:** The MPS can be relocated at any time, enabling law enforcement to respond to emerging issues dynamically. Whether

addressing sudden spikes in crime, traffic concerns, or community needs, the MPS provides an agile response that a brick-and-mortar facility cannot match. This mobility ensures resources are placed where they are needed most, at any given moment.

- **Backup Mobile Command Center for Emergencies:** In the event of a natural disaster, large-scale incident, or other emergencies, the MPS can serve as a secondary or supplemental Mobile Command Vehicle. This dual functionality enhances operational readiness and provides the department with additional flexibility to coordinate response efforts in critical situations, ensuring continuous operations even if primary facilities are compromised.
- **Operational Efficiency with Minimal Staffing:** Unlike maintaining multiple fixed substations, the MPS requires fewer staff to operate effectively. This means that essential personnel can remain focused on patrols, investigations, or other duties without being tied to a single location. The MPS can deliver the same or enhanced police presence without the overhead of staffing multiple physical locations across the city.
- **Minimal Footprint:** The MPS requires minimal space for deployment, allowing for quick setup in various urban environments without causing significant disruptions to the surrounding area.
- **Public Engagement:** The vehicle can be designed to allow for public entry and direct engagement with police staff. This feature enhances community relations by providing an approachable, mobile space for interaction with officers.
- **Dedicated Staff Space:** The MPS will include a separate enclosed area specifically for police staff. This section would offer privacy and the ability to handle administrative tasks, meetings, or sensitive conversations away from public view.
- **Customizable Floorplan:** The layout of the MPS is entirely customizable, allowing the department to design a configuration that meets its specific operational needs. Whether the focus is on community interaction, field operations, or emergency response, the floorplan can be tailored accordingly.
- **Startup Costs:** The initial costs associated with designing and purchasing an MPS would be approximately \$450,000. The vehicle will be serviced and maintained by the City Facilities and Fleet Department, and it will come with a warranty from both the vehicle manufacturer and the vendor responsible for the upfit to meet the city's design specifications.

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 have an adverse impact on police visibility.

To better gauge and decide upon the explored options, the Administration would benefit from a clear definition of the goals and desired outcomes for the police substation expansion project. This collaboration would enable input from all stakeholders, allowing the exploration of alternative strategies that can achieve similar outcomes without negatively affecting MBPD's current staffing capabilities or disrupting other high-priority initiatives already identified by residents, elected officials, and MBPD leadership.

By adopting a collaborative approach, innovative strategies can be developed to meet these goals, potentially through public-private partnerships, minimizing the financial burden on taxpayers while expanding MBPD's presence across the city. Rather than opening multiple permanent substations, the City could simultaneously explore alternatives such as establishing Neighborhood Engagement Offices or Police Field Workstations, which offer enhanced community engagement with reduced operational impact.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- Costs for purchasing or leasing a viable property or properties is yet undetermined and warrants further exploration
- Construction costs to meet City codes and compliance with CALEA standards is yet undetermined; cost would vary based on the identified location and the construction needs to achieve the goals.
 - An example is the city-owned building at 210 2nd Street with an approximate cost of \$380,000+ to enclose the screened patio area. The costs to conduct a complete redesign of this facility (necessary to meet the accreditation standards of a police substation) would be higher than the costs of just enclosing the screened patio area.
 - PD is currently working with Facilities and CIP to accurately estimate these costs.
- 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**. This cost would be compounded based on the number of substations opened.
- **Mobile Police Substation:**
The costs associated with the MPS concept are primarily the startup costs of acquiring the specialized vehicle. The rough estimated cost from the one vendor contacted is \$450,000.00. If this concept is selected and subsequently funded, the Department will initiate the procurement process as soon as possible. The estimated time from order to delivery is currently 12-14 months.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends additional collaboration between the City Commission and the Administration to clearly define the desired outcomes and goals for the police substation expansion project.

As part of this strategy, the Administration recommends the procurement of a Mobile Police Substation (MPS). The MPS option offers maximum flexibility, allowing the Department to increase visibility and presence throughout the city, while minimizing the strain on police staffing and resources. The advantages over a traditional brick-and-mortar substation include:

- **Lower initial cost** compared to leasing or purchasing physical locations.
- **Enhanced flexibility**, allowing relocation to any neighborhood in the city based on real-time needs.
- **Increased citywide visibility** by enabling MBPD to deploy the substation wherever needed.
- **Reduced staffing requirements**, as it can operate with fewer personnel than multiple fixed facilities.
- **Versatility in emergencies**, as the MPS can double as a backup Mobile Command Vehicle when required.
- **Minimal deployment footprint**, making it easy to position in different areas without disruption.
- **Public accessibility**, providing a space for community engagement while maintaining a separate, secure area for police operations.
- **Customizable floorplans**, allowing the vehicle to be tailored to meet the specific needs of MBPD.

This approach would maximize the department's visibility and presence across the city while minimizing the impact on staffing and resources, offering a highly effective, cost-efficient solution for enhancing public safety and community engagement.

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.