

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: January 16, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS THE USE OF THE MIDDLE TURN LANE AS REVERSIBLE LANES ON 41ST STREET TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW DURING PEAK TRAFFIC HOURS.

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 using the center turn lane as a reversible lane on 41 Street to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the June 26, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) referred an agenda item (C4 AE) to the LUSC to discuss the use of the center turn lane as reversible lanes on 41 Street to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours.

State Road (“SR”) 112/41 Street is classified as a principal arterial with four (4) travel lanes (two (2) lanes eastbound and two (2) lanes westbound), and a dedicated center turn lane, primarily used for left turns. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”). The corridor is located in Mid Beach and provides direct access to/from I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway, a limited access federal facility, and SR A1A/Collins Avenue/Indian Creek Drive (also under FDOT’s jurisdiction).

The 41 Street corridor regularly experiences heavy traffic congestion during weekday afternoon peak hours and major special events in the City of Miami Beach (“City”). Several factors contribute to daily recurring traffic congestion along the corridor, including, but not limited to:

- increased volumes due to drivers avoiding major ongoing construction and choke points on I-395/MacArthur Causeway;
- extensive school zones in the area;
- closely spaced traffic signals;
- high number of pedestrian crossings on 41 Street; and
- heavy side street traffic from the connecting north-south avenues which results in vehicles frequently blocking the 41 Street intersections and creating gridlock in all directions.

Based on the FDOT 2022 Level of Service (“LOS”) map, the 41 Street corridor is and has been operating at LOS F (failing) based on the annual average daily traffic and capacity of the roadway.

ANALYSIS

Reversible lanes are a traffic management technique often used to improve traffic flow by changing the direction of travel lanes during a specified period of time to serve the direction with greater travel demand. Its purpose is to increase the directional capacity of the roadway during

peak traffic periods. Reversible lanes on thoroughfares longer than two (2) miles with less than ten (10) traffic signals are encouraged and preferred. Reversible lanes can be used on a single center lane and are marked with a dashed doubled yellow line on both sides of the road with signs above to indicate which lanes are open or closed to vehicular traffic during a specific time of the day. A benefit of reversible lanes is to improve traffic flow without the need for additional infrastructure such as road widening. Reversible lanes tend to be commuter-oriented and primarily serve through vehicular traffic, de-emphasizing pedestrians and bicyclists and restricting left turn movements to access adjacent land uses.

41 Street is a corridor with a large amount of pedestrian activity, nine (9) traffic signals, a school zone, on-street parking on both sides and multiple bus stops along the 3,115-foot roadway segment between Alton Road and Pine Tree Drive. In order to implement reversible lanes on 41 Street, a warrant analysis and feasibility study including data collection, traffic signal mast arm structural analysis, and community outreach are required to determine the feasibility of utilizing the center turn lane as a reversible lane to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours. It is important to note that the center turn lane of 41 Street is frequently used by emergency vehicles, including Fire Rescue, to more quickly access Mount Sinai Medical Center during periods of heavy traffic congestion. Furthermore, since 41 Street is under FDOT's jurisdiction, the study will need to be reviewed and approved by both FDOT and Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works ("DTPW") to proceed with design and implementation.

Tangentially, the Administration is exploring various strategies to manage the increased vehicular demand on 41 Street and the north-south avenues connecting to 41 Street to help improve traffic flow in the immediate area, as well as to improve pedestrian safety, as further described below.

Creation of Dedicated Turn Lanes on the North-South Avenues

The Transportation and Mobility Department engaged Alta Planning & Design, Inc., one of the City's pre-qualified rotational transportation consultants, to conduct a comprehensive traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of creating dedicated turn lanes on the north-south avenues (from Chase Avenue on the west to Sheridan Avenue on the east) approaching 41 Street to more effectively facilitate vehicular turning movements from those avenues onto 41 Street as well crossing 41 Street (north/south). The traffic study includes the feasibility of adding dedicated turn lanes, if warranted, and the impacts, if any, to the existing bulb-outs at the intersections as well as a structural analysis of the traffic signal mast arms to ensure the mast arms can support new additional turning signal heads.

41 Street Traffic Re-Circulation Pilot Program

In an effort to improve mobility for residents traveling north and south along Sheridan and Royal Palm avenues crossing 41 Street, on September 17, 2024, the City implemented the 41 Street Traffic Re-Circulation Pilot Program ("Pilot Program") during the weekday afternoon peak hours of 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Pilot Program, as approved via Resolution No. 2024-33116, maintains the existing two-way traffic flow on Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue. No left turns are allowed onto 41 Street from Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue during the pilot. Police resources are deployed at two (2) 41 Street intersections (Sheridan Avenue and Royal Palm Avenue) to ensure vehicles do not make a left turn onto 41 Street and continue traveling north/south. A consultant was engaged to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Program and measure its impact on the surrounding street network. Based on field observations conducted by City staff, the Pilot Program is performing as intended, and northbound/southbound vehicles on Sheridan and Royal Palm avenues are cleared during each traffic signal cycle (i.e. no significant back-ups observed).

41 Street Corridor Revitalization General Obligation Bond ("GOB") Project

The City's Office of Capital Improvement Projects ("CIP") is currently at 60% design phase for the 41 Street Corridor Revitalization General Obligation Bond ("GOB") Project between Alton Road and Pine Tree Drive. This project focuses on enhancing walkability along the 41 Street corridor and will widen the sidewalks, enhance the existing curb extensions (bulb-outs) with additional

pedestrian crossing signage and create bus pull-out bays in the eastbound and westbound directions along the corridor.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

At this time, funding for a reversible lane traffic study 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 conduct a traffic study to explore the feasibility of implementing reversible lanes along the center turn lane of 41 Street, the Administration will bring a Resolution to the City Commission for consideration at a future meeting, and the item will include a cost estimate for the traffic study required. Should the LUSC and City Commission recommend moving forward, it may be prudent for the City Commission to prioritize this initiative within the FY 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-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TBD

CONCLUSION

The Administration is committed to finding solutions to manage the increased vehicular demand on 41 Street. As such, the Administration recommends conducting a traffic study, to be reviewed and approved by FDOT and DTPW, to evaluate the feasibility of utilizing the center turn lane on 41 Street as a reversible lane to improve traffic flow during peak traffic hours.

The above information is being provided to the LUSC for discussion and feedback.

Applicable Area

Middle 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): N/A

Department

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss Use of Use of the Middle Turn Lane as Reversible Lane on 41st Street to Improve Traffic Flow During Peak Traffic Hours.