

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 THE POTENTIAL REMOVAL OF BULB-OUTS AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS TO INCREASE PARKING AND/OR MITIGATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration ("Administration") recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC" or "Committee") discuss this item and provide feedback. Additionally, the Administration recommends completing the ongoing Traffic Study evaluating the addition of dedicated left-turn lanes on the north-south avenues (from Chase Avenue on the west to Sheridan Avenue on the east) approaching 41 Street and return to the PSNQLC with an update once completed.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the July 24, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Mayor Steven Meiner, the Mayor and City Commission ("City Commission") referred an agenda item (C4 R) to the PSNQLC to discuss the potential removal of bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion. This Committee Memorandum focuses on the potential removal of the existing bulb-outs along the 41 Street corridor.

State Road ("SR") 112/41 Street is classified as a principal arterial 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 increased volumes due to drivers avoiding major ongoing construction and choke points on the I-395/MacArthur Causeway, closely spaced traffic signals, extensive school zones, high number of pedestrian crossings, and heavy side street traffic from the connecting north-south avenues which results in vehicles frequently blocking the 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.

Bulb-outs (often referred to as curb extensions) are physical extensions of the sidewalk into the parking lane to reduce the effective width of the roadway and enhance pedestrian visibility, particularly at intersections. Bulb-outs improve pedestrian safety by shortening pedestrian crossing distances, improving the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other, and reducing the time that pedestrians are exposed while crossing the street.

ANALYSIS

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.

Addition of Dedicated Turn Lanes on the North-South Avenues

The Transportation and Mobility Department engaged Alta Planning & Design, Inc. ("Consultant"), one of the City's pre-qualified rotational transportation consultants, to conduct a comprehensive traffic study (the "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 signals to ensure the existing traffic signal mast arms can support new turning signal devices.

Based on the Consultant's preliminary review of the vehicular turning movement counts collected at the various intersections, it is anticipated that each of the north-south avenues being evaluated will warrant the addition of a dedicated northbound left-turn lane and a southbound left-turn lane approaching 41 Street. **The City anticipates that the dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes on Chase Avenue, Royal Palm Avenue, and Sheridan Avenue could be incorporated within the existing pavement width, through re-striping and modifications to the existing traffic signal devices, without impacting the existing bulb-outs.** Prairie Avenue, however, would require the removal of existing bulb-outs and the on-street parking lane, potentially in both directions, to accommodate dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes while maintaining the existing green bicycle lane in each direction. Further engineering analysis is required to determine if the removal of the bulb-outs on Prairie Avenue requires the relocation of existing infrastructure, including, but not limited to, the traffic signal mast arms.

It is important to note that the City's 41 Street Corridor Revitalization project, currently at 60% design development, proposes to enhance the existing bulb-outs along 41 Street in addition to other pedestrian enhancements. As such, any impacts to the existing bulb-outs to incorporate a dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lane will need to be closely coordinated with this project.

A draft report with the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Traffic Study, which will include the design feasibility analysis and structural feasibility analysis, is anticipated to be completed in January 2025 and will be shared with the City Commission via Letter To Commission ("LTC"), once available. FDOT and DTPW review and approval of the traffic study will be required.

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 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) intersections (Sheridan Avenue and 41 Street and Royal Palm Avenue and 41 Street) to ensure vehicles do not make a left turn onto 41 Street and continue traveling north/south. The 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 both avenues are cleared during every traffic signal cycle (i.e. no significant back-ups).

It is important to note that if the Pilot Program is successful and implemented on a more long-term basis, there would be a conflict with the potential implementation of dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes on Royal Palm and Sheridan avenues.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TBD

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 and the north-south avenues through the potential implementation of dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes approaching 41 Street. As such, the Administration recommends completing the Traffic Study and returning to the PSNQLC with an update once completed.

The above information is being provided to the PSNQLC for discussion and input.

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)

Mayor Steven Meiner

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Laura Dominguez

Condensed Title

Discuss Potential Removal of Bulb-Outs at Certain Locations.