

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: January 29, 2025

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 finalizing the Dedicated Left-Turn Lane Feasibility Study and coordinating the study findings and recommendations with FDOT and Miami-Dade County for approval to proceed to design development. In the interim, the Administration recommends continuing the deployment of the 41 Street Traffic Re-circulation Pilot Program during weekday afternoon peak traffic periods to improve traffic flow in the area on an immediate basis. Furthermore, the Administration recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (“PSNQLC” or “Committee”) discuss this item and provide feedback.

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 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.

At the November 13, 2024 PSNQLC meeting, the Committee discussed this item and requested that the Administration return to the January 29, 2025 PSNQLC meeting with an update.

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.

Creation of Dedicated Left-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 Dedicated Left-Turn Lane Feasibility Study (the "Traffic Study") to evaluate the feasibility of creating dedicated left-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 an analysis of the impacts, if any, to the existing bulb-outs at the intersections as well as a structural analysis to ensure the existing traffic signal mast arms can support the additional weight and wind load due to the installation of new traffic signals. The Consultant submitted a Draft Traffic Study to the City in January 2025, and the draft report is currently being reviewed by Transportation and Mobility Department staff. In addition, FDOT and Miami-Dade County review and approval of the Traffic Study is required in order to advance the project to design development phase.

Based on the findings of the Draft Traffic Study, Chase Avenue, Prairie Avenue, Royal Palm Avenue, and Sheridan Avenue warrant the creation of dedicated left-turn lanes, both northbound and southbound, approaching 41 Street. The dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes on Chase Avenue, Royal Palm Avenue and Sheridan Avenue could be accommodated 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, in order to accommodate dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes while maintaining the existing green bicycle lanes in each direction.

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 dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes along the north-south avenues will need to be closely coordinated with this project.

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 Program. 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 conduct a pre-implementation and post-implementation traffic study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Program and its impact on the surrounding street network. **Based on field observations conducted by City staff and an analysis of the data collected by the Consultant between September 2024 and November 2024, the Pilot Program is performing as intended, and vehicles traveling northbound and southbound along both Sheridan and Royal Palm avenues are able to clear the 41 Street intersection during every traffic signal cycle (i.e. no significant back-ups were observed on those avenues).** However, the Consultant observed some vehicles using Sheridan and Royal Palm avenues to cross 41 Street

and then routing through the neighborhood streets to access westbound 41 Street. Furthermore, the Consultant observed a significant amount of northbound vehicles along Sheridan Avenue making a left-turn at 40 Street and taking Prairie Avenue or Chase Avenue to access 41 Street and travel westbound to the Julia Tuttle Causeway. This particular movement was found to be causing more queuing on westbound 40 Street than prior to the implementation of the Pilot Program.

It is important to note that if the Pilot Program is ultimately deemed effective and implemented on a long-term basis, it would conflict with the potential creation of dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes on Royal Palm and Sheridan avenues. Therefore, **further analysis of the data from both the Dedicated Left-Turn Lane Feasibility Study and the 41 Street Traffic Re-circulation Pilot Program is required to determine which improvement would provide the greater benefit to traffic flow in the area - creating dedicated left-turn lanes along the north-south avenues or implementing the Pilot Program on a permanent basis.**

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, both short-term and long-term, to manage the increased vehicular demand and traffic congestion on and around 41 Street through the ongoing deployment of the 41 Street Traffic Re-circulation Pilot Program along Royal Palm and Sheridan avenues as well as the potential creation of dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes along the north-south avenues approaching 41 Street, as recommended by the Dedicated Left-Turn Lane Feasibility Study.

As such, the Administration recommends finalizing the Dedicated Left-Turn Lane Feasibility Study and coordinating the study findings and recommendations with FDOT and Miami-Dade County for approval to proceed to design development. In the interim, the Administration recommends continuing the deployment of the 41 Street Traffic Re-circulation Pilot Program during weekday afternoon peak traffic periods to improve traffic flow in the area on an immediate basis.

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):

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.