

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager

DATE: June 28, 2024

TITLE: DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN OUTLOTS ALONG INDIAN CREEK DRIVE FOR THE CREATION OF BUS PULLOUT BAY/BUS STOPS TO AMELIORATE TRAFFIC.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration recommends the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (“FERC” or “Committee”) discuss the possible acquisition of certain outlots along Indian Creek Drive for the creation of bus pullout bay/bus stops (“bus bay”) to ameliorate traffic.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

At the March 13, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) referred an item (C4 F) to the FERC to discuss the possible acquisition of certain outlots along Indian Creek Drive for the creation of bus pullout bay/bus stops (“bus bay”) to ameliorate traffic.

At the May 24, 2024 FERC meeting, this item was not reached.

A total of 13 bus stops are currently situated along southbound Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue between 41 Street and 63 Street. The bus stops are utilized by Miami-Dade County (“County”) buses and City of Miami Beach (“City”) trolleys that currently stop on the rightmost travel lane of Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue to pick-up and drop-off passengers on the west sidewalk.

Recently, residents have raised concerns regarding the bus stop at Indian Creek Drive and 43 Street (“Bus Stop”) in particular, as buses and trolleys frequently serve this location and, while doing so, obstruct the flow of traffic along the single southbound right turn lane on Indian Creek Drive approaching 41 Street (Attachment A). The number and frequency of buses and trolleys serving the Bus Stop exacerbates traffic congestion in the area particularly during afternoon peak hours.

The Bus Stop currently serves a total of seven (7) public transit routes: five (5) Miami-Dade County bus routes (14, 36, 79, 100, and 150) and two (2) Miami Beach trolley routes (Collins Express and Middle Beach Trolley). As such, the Bus Stop is one of the busiest in the City in terms of ridership and route transfers. The high ridership at the Bus Stop underscores its critical role in connecting residents, visitors, and workforce to key destinations across the City. The Bus Stop currently has a bus shelter for added passenger comfort and convenience. It is important to note that the Bus Stop is the only location where transit passengers traveling south along Collins Avenue/Indian Creek Drive can transfer to other routes (bus or trolley) to travel westbound on 41 Street, including accessing Mount Sinai Medical Center, thus making the Bus Stop a crucial transfer point in the City’s and County’s transit network.

## **ANALYSIS**

While it is standard operating practice and customary for public transit vehicles to stop on the rightmost travel lane to serve bus stops on the sidewalks, the City Administration ("Administration") recognizes that this operation can be disruptive to traffic flow along major thoroughfares, including, but not limited to, Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue in Mid-Beach. An option to ameliorate the frequent conflicts between vehicular traffic and public transit vehicles at bus stops along this corridor would be to create bus bays on the parcels of privately-owned land abutting the west side of Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue between 43 Street and 63 Street ("outlots"), i.e. the swale areas between the southbound right lane and the Indian Creek waterway. Bus bays would provide a dedicated space, separated from the travel lanes, for transit vehicles to pull into, thus eliminating the need for buses and trolleys to stop on the travel lane and impede traffic flow.

This option, however, would require the acquisition of certain outlots along the west side of Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue for the construction of bus bays to reduce traffic congestion and improve public transit functionality and safety on this highly traveled corridor. Furthermore, coordination with and approval from the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works ("DTPW"), which operates County bus service, would be required. A case-by-case evaluation of potential bus bay locations is essential in determining suitability, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness.

### **Engagement with DTPW**

The Transportation and Mobility Department ("Department") has initiated discussions with DTPW to assess whether the construction of a potential bus bay at the Bus Stop located at Indian Creek Drive and 43 Street would align with DTPW's safety and operational standards for maintaining a safe and efficient transit environment.

Given the current configuration of Indian Creek Drive, if a bus bay is implemented at the Bus Stop, buses would be required to navigate two (2) travel lanes to continue traveling southbound along Indian Creek Drive. Moreover, the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") is planning to commence a roadway construction project in early 2025 to add a southbound right turn lane at the intersection of Indian Creek Drive and 41 Street (i.e. creating dual southbound right turn lanes). In light of this FDOT project, if a bus bay is implemented at the Bus Stop, buses would be required to navigate three (3) travel lanes to serve the Bus Stop and continue traveling southbound along Indian Creek Drive.

Discussions with DTPW are ongoing, thus it is not yet known if DTPW would be amenable to the potential implementation of a bus bay at or in proximity to the Bus Stop.

### **Evaluation of Potential Bus Bay Locations**

To continue to effectively serve as a convenient transfer point, the Bus Stop must be located between 41 Street and 44 Street. However, due to the future configuration of Indian Creek Drive, the Bus Stop may need to be relocated to the north between 43 Street and 44 Street. Currently, there are two (2) private outlots within these boundaries that could be explored for a potential acquisition and evaluated to determine the feasibility of accommodating a bus bay (Attachment B).

For the remaining 12 bus stops located along southbound Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue between 44 Street and 63 Street, a similar approach can be adopted consisting of a detailed evaluation of each potential bus bay location to determine the need and feasibility of implementation. The strategic positioning of bus bays along the corridor is anticipated to improve traffic flow and enhance the efficiency of public transit operations.

### **Bus Bay Design Standards**

According to the FDOT standards (Attachment C), a bus bay should be designed to meet the

following minimum specifications:

Length: A minimum stopping length of 50 feet for a standard bus or 70 feet for an articulated bus, plus an additional 60-80 feet for the entry taper, and 60 feet for the exit taper, thus resulting in a total length of 170-210 feet.

Width: Typically 12 feet to accommodate the width of a standard bus and ensure safe boarding and alighting for passengers.

#### Property Acquisition and Cost Considerations

Acquiring property for the implementation of a bus bay(s) involves substantial financial considerations. The costs associated with acquiring outlots are yet to be determined. A financial analysis is crucial in evaluating feasibility and securing the necessary funding.

#### Potential Short-Term Option

Given the acquisition of outlots and creation of bus bays requires time and funds, in the interim, the Transportation and Mobility Department will work with DTPW to explore the possibility of relocating the Bus Stop further north between 43 Street and 44 Street. However, relocation of the Bus Stop a few feet to the north is not expected to effectively address the traffic flow issue and may simply shift the problem to another location.

### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Should the FERC recommend that the Administration explore the feasibility of acquiring outlots to construct a bus bay(s), the Administration will take a resolution to the City Commission for acceptance of the FERC recommendation. Should the City Commission adopt a resolution accepting FERC's recommendation, the Administration will proceed to approach the outlot owner(s) to explore the feasibility of acquisition.

### **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 implementation of bus bays on the west side of Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue between 43 Street and 63 Street would provide a dedicated space for transit vehicles to pull into and eliminate the need for buses and trolleys to stop on the travel lane and impede traffic flow.

With regard to the Bus Stop located at Indian Creek Drive and 43 Street, there are two (2) private outlots that could be explored for potential acquisition and evaluated to determine the feasibility of accommodating a bus bay to provide bus drivers with sufficient space to safely navigate travel lanes and minimize conflicts with other vehicles.

The evaluation of the remaining 12 bus stops located on the west side of Indian Creek Drive/Collins Avenue between 44 Street and 63 Street will require a similar evaluation on a case-by-case basis to determine suitability, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness. However, it is crucial to continue to collaborate with the County to ensure that any modifications or developments to the

existing bus stops adhere to DTPW's safety and operational standards for maintaining a safe and efficient transit environment.

**Applicable Area**

Middle Beach

**Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

Yes

**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)**