

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members
FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager
DATE: May 7, 2025
TITLE: DISCUSS EXPLORING WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS AND EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES WITH THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration (“Administration”) recommends that the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (“FERC” or “Committee”) endorse the Administration’s recommendation to conduct an Employee Commuter Survey to ascertain employee interest in a potential one-seat ride shuttle service from/to existing park-and-ride facilities in the mainland and major employment centers in the City of Miami Beach (“City”), to determine whether the employee density and passenger demand would justify the implementation of such shuttle service, and to determine if the service would be cost-effective.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the February 26, 2025, City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission (“City Commission”) referred an item (C4 AD) to the FERC to discuss exploring workforce transportation solutions and employer partnership initiatives with the City to provide a direct, efficient transit option that improves commute reliability while alleviating congestion during weekday peak traffic hours.

As the City continues to grow and develop as a vibrant economic hub, ensuring accessible and efficient transportation options for the workforce is critical. Private employers such as Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Fontainebleau Hotel, the Loews Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center are significant contributors to the local economy, providing thousands of jobs. However, many of their employees who live outside the City face daily challenges in accessing their employment centers due to limited regional public transportation options and traffic congestion.

In response to these challenges, a potential partnership among these major employers, the City, and Miami-Dade County (“County”) could be explored to provide a solution that ensures seamless and efficient transit access for workers. This collaboration would focus on providing a one-seat ride shuttle service connecting park-and-ride locations in the mainland directly to major employment centers in the City, thus reducing reliance on private vehicles and enhancing overall mobility, both regional and local.

On February 27, 2025, under the leadership of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Administration met with representatives of Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Fontainebleau Hotel, the Loews Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center to discuss workforce commuting options, including the potential to provide a one-seat shuttle service from strategic park-and-ride locations throughout the County to these key employment centers in the City.

ANALYSIS

The Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit (“SMART”) Plan

The SMART Plan is a comprehensive transit expansion strategy for the County, with the primary goal of providing a robust transit network with enhanced connectivity, sustainability, and service coverage. Attachment A includes the SMART Plan Map. The SMART Plan focuses on six (6) rapid transit corridors with the goal of improving mobility, reducing traffic congestion, and providing more reliable transit options throughout the region. The six (6) rapid transit corridors are as follows:

- Beach Corridor: From Midtown Miami to Miami Beach Convention Center
- East-West Corridor: From Tamiami Station to Miami Intermodal Center
- Kendall Corridor: From Dadeland Metrorail Station to Krome Avenue
- North Corridor: From Martin L. King, Jr. Metrorail Station to NW 215 Street
- Northeast Corridor: From Downtown Miami to City of Aventura
- South Dade Transit Way: From Dadeland South Metrorail Station to SW 344 Street Transit Terminal in Florida City

The benefits of the six (6) SMART Plan corridors are further described in Attachment B.

Bus Express Rapid Transit (“BERT”) Network

One of the key features of the SMART Plan is the BERT Network, which is designed to provide reliable and convenient express bus service, improve travel times, and reduce congestion on major corridors. Buses on the BERT Network will operate on the express lanes, managed lanes and shoulders of expressways, and dedicated bus lanes, so buses can travel at a higher speed than the adjacent vehicular traffic. Through the BERT Network, the County will provide reliable and convenient express bus service connecting commuters to and from the six (6) SMART Plan Rapid Transit Corridors and major employment centers. Attachment C includes the BERT Network Fact Sheet.

As part of the BERT Network, three (3) routes are proposed to connect the City to the mainland (Beach Express North, Beach Express Central, and Beach Express South). In particular, the Beach Express North BERT proposes to connect the Golden Glades Multimodal Facility to the Earlington Heights Metrorail Station adjacent to the Miami International Airport, the Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Fontainebleau Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center via the express lanes on I-95 and the dedicated transit lanes on the I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway inside shoulders (see pages 2 and 5 of Attachment C depicting the route alignment). The County anticipates commencing operations of the Beach Express North BERT service in July 2025.

South Florida Commuter Services (SFCS)

Under authority of Chapters 187 and 341, Florida Statutes, the Florida Department of Transportation (“FDOT”) provides financial and technical assistance to promote alternatives to commuters driving alone. South Florida Commuter Services (“SFCS”), an FDOT program, seeks to decongest roadways in South Florida through a variety of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies. SFCS’ primary activities involve working with major employers and advocating for and highlighting the benefits of the following services offered:

- Carpooling: 2+ people commuting together
- Vanpooling: 4-15 people commuting together in a State-sponsored van or SUV
- Flexible Work Schedules: Working full-time but commuting outside of morning and afternoon rush hours
- Mass Transit: An alternative to driving offering regular, economical & dependable transit
- Bicycling: The greenest, healthiest option for commuting
- Walking: Healthy option for commuters who live close to their place of employment
- Park-and-Ride Facilities: Public parking locations strategically located throughout the County to provide convenient places to meet for a commuting option – usually free
- Guaranteed Ride Home: In the event of unforeseen circumstances, SFCS will pay for commuters’ rides home

On March 18, 2025, the Administration met with representatives of SFCS to ascertain how their services could assist the daily commute for thousands of workforce employees of the Mount Sinai Medical Center, Fontainebleau Hotel, Lowes Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center. The Administration worked with SFCS to develop a Miami Beach Employee Commuter Survey (Attachment D) to be shared with all the employees of the City of Miami Beach, Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Fontainebleau Hotel, the Loews Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center to obtain feedback from the employees and ascertain interest in TDM options and available mass transit solutions, and in particular, a potential one-seat ride shuttle option from/to park-and-ride locations (depicted in Attachments A and B) and the aforementioned key employment centers in the City.

Potential Park-and-Ride Shuttle Service (One-Seat Ride)

As a workforce commuting option, the Administration is exploring the feasibility of establishing a free employee bus service to commute from dedicated park-and-ride locations (depicted in Attachments A and B) to the major employment centers in the City via a one-seat ride. To that end, the Administration developed an interactive Employee Population Heat Map which shows the employee population by zip-code based on the residential addresses of employees from the following major employers in the City: City of Miami Beach, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Fontainebleau Hotel, Loews Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center. Attachment E includes an excerpt of the Employee Population Heat Map.

As such, the Administration recommends conducting the Employee Commuter Survey to ascertain employee interest and whether the density and passenger demand would justify the implementation of a one-seat ride shuttle service. The data from the surveys would also be used to determine which existing park-and-ride facilities would be appropriate for such shuttle service.

Tangentially, the Administration is considering utilizing the services of a “big data” analytics company, such as StreetLight Data, Inc. (“StreetLight”). StreetLight utilizes aggregated GPS data to provide daily traffic flow metrics between network origins and destinations. A Network Origin-Destination (“Network O-D”) Analysis provides a quick, easy, and cost-effective way to measure 15-minute, hourly or daily traffic flows between network segment origin and destinations averaged at the yearly, monthly, or user-defined time period. Network O-D Analysis includes a unique blend of device navigation apps, traditional mobile data apps, and in-vehicle navigation apps. This data source compiles information about the trajectories of vehicles and devices across the road network which can be attributed to specified origin and destination segments. The resulting data could provide insight into how many drivers using our major thoroughfares during afternoon weekday peak periods live outside the City as well as other relevant data which could be useful in shaping traffic mitigation policies.

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

N/A

CONCLUSION

The partnership between the City, FDOT, the County, and private employers like Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Fontainebleau Hotel, the Loews Hotel, and the Miami Beach Convention Center represent a significant opportunity to enhance workforce mobility and improve public transit access in the City. By establishing a reliable transit service and a potential one-seat shuttle service from strategic park-and-ride locations throughout the County to key employment centers in the City, it can provide a more efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective solution for employees, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to the City's broader economic and environmental goals.

This item is being presented to the FERC for discussion.

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): N/A

Department

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

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Condensed Title

Workforce Transportation Solutions/Employer Partnership Initiative