

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: March 26, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS BEAUTIFYING WASHINGTON AVENUE BY ENHANCING LIGHTING
AND STREETSCAPING ON WASHINGTON AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends replacing the sidewalks and pedestrian light fixtures along Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street, utilizing General Obligation (G.O.) Bond funding and incorporating input from the Washington Avenue Business Improvement District (BID).

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

On June 26, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez, co-sponsored by Commissioners Joseph Magazine, David Suarez, Alex Fernandez, and Tanya Bhatt, the Mayor and City Commission (City Commission) approved referral item C4C (Attachment A), to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (FERC) meeting, to discuss beautifying Washington Avenue by enhancing lighting and streetscaping.

There had been similar requests brought up for discussion by City Commission members at the Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) and FERC to enhance lighting on South Beach, however, neither request turned into favorable recommendations to the City Commission for approval, due to costs for installation and maintenance exceeding \$1 Million.

On September 20, 2024, FERC members were provided sidewalk and lighting updates along Washington Avenue. Public Works presented two proposals for wrap lights on median trees for the east and west sidewalks, including maintenance costs for a period of one year after installation. The breakdown for these costs were:

- Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street (median trees): \$272,532
- Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street (east and west sidewalks): \$1,195,950

Public Works reiterated at Committee that funding for the proposed wrap lights had yet to be identified. There was also a discussion about the \$10 Million G.O. Bond fund as part of the Washington Avenue Corridor Project. Said funding, once allocated, would be used to invest in capital improvements, permanent lighting and landscaping along Washington Avenue. Wrap lights, however, since considered temporary fixtures, would not be eligible for G.O. Bond funding.

Discussions at Committee continued, focusing on how to reenergize Washington Avenue short and long term, using G.O. Bond funds. There were discussions regarding the need to have the Washington Avenue BID be involved in these efforts along with the City (they have since been engaged). FERC members made a favorable recommendation to move the item to the October 30, 2024, City Commission meeting for approval to proceed with the installation of wrap lights on median trees on Washington Avenue, from 5th Street to 17th Street, in the approximate amount of \$273,000. FERC members also requested for the Administration to come back to the November 8, 2024, FERC meeting to provide cost estimates for sidewalk repairs/replacement and cost for the replacement of lighting fixtures along Washington Avenue.

On November 8, 2024, FERC members discussed the total cost for in-kind replacement of grey sidewalk and light fixtures estimated at \$1,537,000, to be funded through the G.O. Bond. Committee members expressed a desire to upgrade the sidewalk materials, since there was enough money funded under the G.O. Bond. Direction was given to have staff return to the January 24, 2025, FERC meeting, with an updated cost and plan including upgrading sidewalk materials. On January 24, 2025 FERC members were presented with an Exposed Shell Specialty concrete option to be considered. The discussion continued and concluded with a motion to return to the March 26, 2025, FERC meeting with an additional 3-4 recommendations for specialty sidewalks.

ANALYSIS

Sidewalks

The Administration has obtained three (3) additional estimates from several contractors for alternative sidewalk improvements along Washington Avenue between 5th and 17th streets to include Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance and other factors not previously included.

The following are five (5) options and estimated costs:

(Costs do not include yearly maintenance fees estimated at 5%)

- 1) The Regular red concrete sidewalk (\$1,418,381.68)
- 2) Exposed Shell Specialty concrete sidewalk (\$2,217,430)

- 3) Stamped Specialty sidewalks (\$1,893,612)
- 4) Paver bricks (\$9,418,541)
- 5) Red and grey concrete sidewalk (\$2,506,410)

REGULAR RED CONCRETE SIDEWALK

Pros:

- Affordable: generally, the most cost-effective option
- Smooth Surface: even and uniform, making it accessible for all users (e.g., wheelchairs, strollers)
- Low Maintenance: easy to clean and does not require much upkeep beyond sealing (if necessary)

Cons:

- Prone to Cracking: susceptible to cracks over time due to ground movement or weathering
- Appearance: Color may fade over time

EXPOSED SHELL CONCRETE SIDEWALK

Pros:

- Aesthetic Appeal: features embedded shells for a natural, decorative, and coastal-inspired look
- Durability: the embedded shells can increase surface hardness and resilience
- Slip Resistance: textured surface provides good traction, especially in wet conditions
- Unique Appearance: no two installations are identical due to the variation in shell patterns
- Eco-Friendly: often uses reclaimed or recycled shells, which is environmentally friendly

Cons:

- Higher Cost: typically, more expensive due to materials and specialized labor
- Rough Texture: less comfortable for bare feet compared to smooth surfaces
- Maintenance: dirt and debris can accumulate in textured areas, requiring regular cleaning
- Repair Challenges: matching the shell pattern during repairs can be difficult, making patches visible
- Prone to Cracking: susceptible to cracks over time due to ground movement or weathering
- Appearance: color may fade over time

STAMPED CONCRETE SIDEWALK

Pros:

- Customizable Designs: can mimic the appearance of stone, brick, tile, or wood, offering a high-end look
- Wide Range of Colors: can be stained or dyed to achieve nearly any color scheme
- Durability: seamless construction provides greater resistance to shifting and settling than loose pavers
- Increased Property Value: enhances curb appeal and can make the property more attractive

Cons:

- Cost: more expensive than regular concrete, though usually less than exposed shell concrete
- Maintenance: requires regular resealing to maintain its appearance and prevent damage
- Risk of Cracking: like regular concrete, stamped concrete is prone to cracking; cracks are harder to repair without visible seams
- Skilled Labor Needed: installation requires experienced contractors to achieve the desired pattern and finish
- Appearance: color may fade over time

PAVER BRICKS

Pros:

- Durability: made from high-quality materials like concrete, which are designed to withstand harsh weather conditions
- Slip Resistance: many of their pavers have a textured surface, providing better traction and reducing the risk of slipping, especially in wet conditions
- Eco-Friendly: some paver bricks feature permeable designs, which allow water to pass through, reducing stormwater runoff and helping with drainage

Cons:

- Higher Cost: can be more expensive compared to other paver styles
- Installation Complexity: paver bricks are relatively heavy which can make installation more labor-intensive and require additional tools or help
- Risk of Cracking: although durable, concrete pavers can crack under extreme pressure or impact, especially if they are not maintained properly
- High Maintenance: proper installation is critical to ensure longevity. Poor installation can lead to shifting or settling over time, which will require repairs
- Appearance: difficult to find similar replacement pavers for repairs after a few years

RED & GREY CONCRETE SIDEWALK

Pros:

- Visual Appeal: a red and grey patterned sidewalk adds a bold, stylish touch to outdoor spaces. it can enhance the curb appeal and make the sidewalk a focal point.
- Increased Aesthetic Value: the contrast between the red and grey can create depth and texture, giving the sidewalk an upscale, professional appearance that can elevate the overall design of the area.
- Durability: both red and grey concrete are durable and provide long-lasting solutions, ensuring that the patterned sidewalk will withstand heavy foot traffic and the elements.

Cons:

- Cost and Labor: patterned concrete often requires more complex work, which can increase both material and labor costs. More detailed patterns might also take longer to install
- Complex Maintenance: if the concrete start to stain, crack, or fade, the difficult pattern could make repairs more challenging and expensive
- Cleaning Difficulties: depending on the pattern's complexity, cleaning between the different sections or grooves in the design could be more time-consuming and challenging compared to a simple uniform sidewalk
- Prone to Cracking: susceptible to cracks over time due to ground movement or weathering

COMPARISON SUMMARY

Feature	Regular Red Concrete	Exposed Shell Concrete	Stamped Concrete	Paver Bricks	Red & Grey Concrete
Cost	Low	Medium-High	Medium	Very High	Medium-High
Aesthetic Appeal	Basic	Unique, Coastal Look	Highly Customizable	Unique	Moderate/ Stylish
Durability	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Slip Resistance	High	High	Moderate-High	Moderate - High	High
Maintenance	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Very High	Low-Medium
Repair Difficulty	Easy	Difficult	Moderate	Difficult	Moderate

REGULAR RED CONCRETE SIDEWALK



EXPOSED SHELL CONCRETE SIDEWALK



STAMPED CONCRETE SIDEWALK



PAVER BRICKS



MIX RED & GREY



Additionally, a study was conducted by Calvin, Giordano and Associates, showing the different sidewalk options for Ocean Drive for design consideration (Attachment B).

Lighting

The cost to replace the Pedestrian Light Fixtures remains at an estimated: \$650,000 (LED, 4K Acorn light fixtures).

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The total fiscal impact will be determined once a decision has been made for the sidewalk material and application type.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends replacing the sidewalks and pedestrian light fixtures along Washington Avenue from 5th Street to 17th Street, utilizing G.O. Bond funding and incorporating input from the Washington Avenue BID.

Applicable Area

South 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?

Yes

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

Public Works

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Joseph Magazine

Commissioner David Suarez

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Commissioner Tanya Bhatt,

Condensed Title

DISCUSS BEAUTIFYING WASHINGTON AVENUE BY ENHANCING LIGHTING AND STREETSCAPING ON WASHINGTON AVENUE