


MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager 

DATE: February 26, 2025

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE, AT ITS JANUARY 29, 2025 MEETING, DIRECTING THE ADMINISTRATION TO EVALUATE 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 Mayor and City Commission ("City Commission") adopt the resolution.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the July 24, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Mayor Steven Meiner, the City Commission referred an agenda item (C4 R) to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC" or "Committee") to discuss the potential removal of bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion. This Commission Memorandum focuses on the existing bulb-outs along the 41 Street corridor, while providing actionable steps to address the PSNQLC's recommendation to conduct an analysis to evaluate the potential removal of bulb-outs at certain locations throughout the City to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion through the creation of dedicated turn lanes.

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 volumes 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.

At the January 29, 2025 PSNQLC meeting, the Committee discussed this item and recommended that the Transportation and Mobility Department conduct an analysis of all existing bulb-outs throughout the City to determine the feasibility of potentially removing bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion through the creation of dedicated turning lanes. Furthermore, the Committee recommended to move this item to the City Commission for further discussion.

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 Intersecting 41 Street

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 need and feasibility of creating dedicated turn lanes (either left turn or right 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 as crossing 41 Street (north/south). The Traffic Study includes an analysis of the impacts, if any, to the existing bulb-outs at the intersections. 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 data collected (i.e. the total volume of left turning and right turning vehicles during peak periods), the Draft Traffic Study found that 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 recommended 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, to accommodate dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes while maintaining the existing green bicycle lanes in each direction.**

The Transportation and Mobility Department staff will continue to work with FDOT to secure approval of the Traffic Study and identify funding for the design phase of the recommended dedicated northbound and southbound left turn lanes on Chase Avenue, Royal Palm Avenue, and Sheridan Avenue approaching the 41 Street intersection.

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.

Analysis of Existing Bulb-Outs Throughout the City

A traffic engineering analysis is required to determine if turn lanes could be accommodated at locations where bulb-outs currently exist as well as to identify the associated intersection modifications required to accommodate the creation of such turn lanes. Should the City Commission accept by Resolution the recommendation of the PSNQLC at its January 29, 2025

meeting directing City staff to evaluate the potential removal of existing bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion through the creation of dedicated turning lanes, the Transportation and Mobility Department staff will reach out to one of the City's rotational transportation consultants to obtain a scope of services and a fee proposal for the required analysis. At this time, the cost and timeline of such analysis has not yet been determined.

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 launched 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 Traffic 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 - implementing dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes on Royal Palm and Sheridan Avenues or implementing the Pilot Program on a permanent basis.**

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

With regard to the design and construction of the recommended dedicated northbound and southbound left turn lanes on Chase Avenue, Royal Palm Avenue, and Sheridan Avenue, the Administration will continue to work with FDOT to determine next steps, identify potential FDOT funding, and determine whether any City funds will be required to implement the recommended improvements.

The cost of conducting a citywide feasibility analysis to evaluate the potential removal of existing bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion has not been determined at this time. The Transportation and Mobility Department staff will reach out to one of the City's rotational transportation consultants to obtain a scope of services and a fee proposal for the analysis. Funding for the feasibility analysis has not been identified, budgeted, or appropriated. Once a cost for the feasibility analysis has been determined, the Administration may

propose a budget amendment at a future City Commission meeting or work through the Fiscal Year 2025/26 budget process to allocate funding for the analysis.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

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 Traffic Study.

As such, the Administration recommends finalizing the Traffic Study and coordinating the 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 north-south traffic flow in the area on an immediate basis.

Tangentially, pursuant to the recommendation of the PSNQLC and this Resolution from the City Commission, and provided funding is identified and allocated, the Transportation and Mobility Department will engage a traffic consultant to conduct an analysis of all existing bulb-outs in the City to determine the feasibility of potentially removing bulb-outs at certain locations to increase parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion through the creation of dedicated turning lanes.

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):

Department

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Mayor Steven Meiner

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Laura Dominguez

Condensed Title

Accept Recomm. Potential Removal of Bulb-outs. (Meiner/Dominguez) TR

Previous Action (For City Clerk Use Only)

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Mayor Steven Meiner
DATE: July 24, 2024
TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL REMOVAL OF BULB-OUTS AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS TO INCREASE PARKING AND/OR MITIGATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

RECOMMENDATION

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

ANALYSIS

Please place on the July 24, 2024 agenda a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to discuss the possibility of evaluating bulb-outs in the City and identifying certain locations where the bulb-outs can be removed, without compromising pedestrian safety, in order to increase available parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion by increasing the flow of traffic, and potentially add a dedicated turn lane to replace the bulb-out.

Bulb-outs, also known as curb extensions, are designed to extend the sidewalk into the parking lane and, in theory, thereby improve pedestrian safety by reducing crossing distances and enhancing visibility. However, in some locations, bulb-outs can also contribute to reduced parking availability and increased traffic congestion. As such, identifying and addressing bulb-out locations with these issues is essential for improving the quality of life for the City's residents and visitors.

Accordingly, I would request that the City Administration, including the Transportation Department, Parking Department and Public Works Department, be prepared at Committee to discuss the possibility of removing bulb-outs at certain locations in order to increase available parking and/or mitigate traffic congestion. I would further request that the Administration be prepared to advise the Committee as to the most appropriate means by which bulb-outs in the City can be analyzed, evaluated, and identified for possible removal.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .