

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: May 7, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS DEPLOYMENT OF PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS ON LINCOLN ROAD AND WASHINGTON AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission consider implementing a pilot security guard program along both the Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue corridors.

The Administration recommends that while the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee evaluates the pilot security guard program, it also carefully considers several critical factors that will significantly impact the General Fund budget, beginning in FY 2026:

1. The City's increasing unfunded capital improvement program
2. Long-term General Fund financial projections indicating a potential shortfall in upcoming fiscal years
3. The passage of Amendment 5 in November 2024, which increases the homestead exemption and further constrains the growth of taxable property values

These considerations are essential to ensure that decisions regarding the pilot security guard program align with the City's broader long-term financial stability and strategic priorities. If the Committee recommends funding the pilot program, the Administration recommends it be considered as part of the FY 2026 budget process.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the February 3, 2025 City Commission Meeting, at the request of Commissioner David Suarez, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral (C4 AQ) to the Financial and Economic Resiliency Committee ("FERC") to discuss the deployment of private security officers on Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue.

ANALYSIS

In 2009 a security vendor was tasked with staffing and deploying security officers on bicycles along Lincoln Road. Although it is unknown by whom this was funded, the program was a success as it not only augmented police resources but provided increased uniformed visibility and deterrence. In addition to security being a force multiplier for the Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD), this program successfully reduced the number of incidents that required the response of police officers as many quality-of-life incidents were quickly handled by the security officers. In addition, security officers provided countless numbers of "citizen contacts" to pedestrians who desired information along this mall. It is thought that after this security program was dissolved, the Lincoln Road BID staffed and deployed Lincoln Road Ambassadors which are still there today. Although helpful, these ambassadors do not participate in any enforcement role.

In preparing this memorandum, the Department anecdotally polled police officers assigned to

both the Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue corridors to determine when officers experienced the most amount of foot traffic in addition to the amount of police incidents self-initiated or responded to. Data identifying the hours, days of the week, and the number of incidents was also gathered by the Department's Crime Analysis Unit. While several incidents did in fact occur after midnight, these incidents are speculated to have occurred at or outside of late-night establishments such as a package stores, restaurants, bars, or nightclubs. The Department does not recommend that security officers patrol after midnight as many of those incidents involve pedestrians or club revelers that could be under the influence of alcohol or narcotics thereby increasing the danger level for unarmed uniformed security personnel.

Studies show that a criminal event is less likely to occur if there is visible enforcement personnel present such as security guards. Supported by the data gathered, the Administration, therefore, recommends the staffing and deployment of security officers on bicycles along these corridors as a pilot program for re-evaluation after an agreed to period. (While bicycle use is prohibited for the general public along Lincoln Road, note that both security officers and law enforcement officials are exempt from the prohibition while on patrol.) Four (4) security officers would be assigned to Lincoln Road in two shifts, seven (7) days per week from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and again from 4:00 P.M. to midnight. Their patrol areas would be from the Beachwalk to Alton Road with two (2) officers assigned from the Beachwalk to Washington Avenue, one (1) officer assigned from Washington Avenue to Meridian, and one (1) officer from Meridian to Alton Road.

Along Washington Avenue, the Administration recommends the same shift schedule in the following configurations: two (2) security guards from 5th Street to 11th Street and two (2) security guards from 11th Street to 16th Street. Communication plan details would be further established internally if the program were to be implemented.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Based on this proposed plan, an estimated 896 hours would be worked per week, totaling 112 hours per officer. The weekly amount is estimated at \$23,609 with an annualized cost of approximately **\$1,227,699** (Exhibit A).

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission consider moving forward with a pilot security guard program along the both the Lincoln Road and Washington Avenue corridors. It is the belief of the Administration that the pilot would not only enhance public safety by being a force multiplier for the police department but would also establish community ambassadors as well as be cost efficient as the price of security guards is significantly less than the cost of engaging police officers.

Applicable Area

South 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

Police

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner David Suarez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Private Security Officers for Lincoln Road & Washington Avenue