

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee Members
FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager
DATE: May 8, 2025
TITLE: DISCUSS DEDICATED BUS LANES ON WASHINGTON AVENUE.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration ("Administration") recommends that the Land Use and Sustainability Committee ("LUSC" or "Committee") discuss this item and recommend continuing to work with Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works ("DTPW") to prioritize and expedite the implementation of the proposed Beach Express South Bus Express Rapid Transit ("BERT") route, and in particular, the dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the June 26, 2024, City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission ("City Commission") referred an agenda item (C4 W) to the LUSC to discuss dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue.

The Miami-Dade County Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit ("SMART") Plan comprises six (6) Rapid Transit Corridors and eight (8) Bus Express Rapid Transit ("BERT") routes. The SMART Plan envisions one (1) rapid transit corridor connecting Downtown Miami and the City of Miami Beach ("City") via the MacArthur Causeway ("Beach Corridor" or "Baylink"), and three (3) BERT routes connecting the City to the mainland (i.e. Beach Express North, Beach Express Central, and Beach Express South).

The three (3) proposed Beach Express BERT routes are intended to provide a reliable, convenient, and express public transit option for the tens of thousands of Miami Beach workforce employees, particularly for those who do not live in Miami Beach and experience a challenging daily commute, either by personal vehicle or bus. Specifically, the Beach Express South BERT route proposes to connect the Miami Beach Convention Center to the Miami Central (Brightline) Station in Downtown Miami via the MacArthur Causeway, 5 Street, and dedicated bus lanes along Washington Avenue from 5 Street to 17 Street. Attached is a BERT Network Fact Sheet and maps depicting the proposed BERT routes. The Beach Express South BERT route is depicted as Route f3 on pages 2 and 6 of the Attachment. It is worth noting that the South Beach Trolley Loops A and B would also benefit from utilizing the future dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue.

Furthermore, on January 30, 2020, the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization ("TPO") unanimously selected a locally preferred alternative ("LPA") for the Beach Corridor project. Specifically for the City of Miami Beach service, the Beach Corridor LPA consists of an automated and elevated rubber-tire technology (monorail or automated people mover) along the MacArthur Causeway/5 Street corridor to a proposed elevated station on 5 Street in the vicinity of Washington Avenue; and bi-directional at-grade dedicated bus/trolley lanes along Washington Avenue to connect the proposed station at 5 Street/Washington Avenue to/from the Miami Beach Convention Center (to be implemented separately).

ANALYSIS

In October 2024, the Transportation and Mobility Department staff contacted DTPW to request an update on the status of the Beach Express South BERT route. In response, DTPW advised that it had completed a Draft Dynamic Traffic Analysis ("Analysis"), as requested by the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT"), to evaluate the traffic impacts of repurposing a vehicular travel lane in each direction along Washington Avenue to accommodate dedicated bus lanes. FDOT had reviewed the Draft Analysis and requested additional data collection necessary for a comprehensive traffic study encompassing both the proposed Beach Express South BERT route and the proposed Beach Corridor project. At the time, DTPW was working closely with FDOT to identify additional funding necessary to ensure the completion of a thorough and accurate Analysis.

At the November 25, 2024 LUSC meeting, City staff provided the above update on the proposed Beach Express South BERT route and the dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue. The Committee requested that the Administration return to the May 8, 2025 LUSC meeting with an update on this item

Update Since the November 25, 2024 LUSC Meeting

City staff have made several follow-up attempts to obtain a written update from the DTPW regarding the status of the proposed Beach Express South BERT route. Since the last correspondence in October 2024, no further updates have been received. It is our understanding that FDOT requires DTPW to complete a comprehensive traffic study before the project can move forward, though no timeline for this study has been shared to date. The City remains committed to collaborating with DTPW to help advance this important initiative.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

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 Administration has not seen significant progress on the status of the proposed Beach Express South BERT route. The Beach Express North BERT route is slated to begin in July 2025. The Administration proposes to continue to work with DTPW to prioritize and expedite the implementation of the Beach Express South BERT route, and in particular, the dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue, as proposed in the Miami-Dade County SMART Plan.

Applicable Area

South Beach

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

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

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)

Condensed Title

Discuss Dedicated Bus Lanes on Washington Ave.