

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: March 12, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS THE INSTALLATION OF A "COMMUNITY PIANO," ALONG WITH PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR ONE PIANO IN SOUTH BEACH AND ONE IN NORTH BEACH

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee discuss the installation of a "Community Piano" program, along with proposed locations for one (1) piano in South Beach and one (1) in North Beach. Should the Committee have a favorable recommendation to fund a potential temporary Community Piano program, the Administration recommends that it be temporary in nature in line with previous activations of such a program throughout the country, including Miami-Dade County, and be considered as part of the FY 2026 budget process.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

At the February 3, 2025, City Commission Meeting, the Mayor and Commission approved a referral by Commissioner Alex Fernandez to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) to discuss installing "community pianos" in South Beach and North Beach.

At the January 20, 2022, City Commission Meeting, the Mayor and Commission approved a referral by Commissioner Alex Fernandez to the Art in Public Places Committee (AiPP) to make recommendations regarding the selection of an artist-designed "Community Piano," along with proposed locations for the installation of the community piano within the Art Deco Cultural District.

The memorandum included considering partnerships with local schools to provide opportunities for students to earn community service hours and gain performance experience and explore other ways to collaborate with local arts organizations to sponsor activations such as free concerts or other performances.

The Tourism and Culture Cultural Affairs Division conducted due diligence to gather information to present to the AiPP Committee the potential of a community piano installation program. Staff identified two organizations: The Sing for Hope Pianos and Street Pianos.

Staff selected the "The Sing for Hope Pianos" as the organization with the most significant public art projects, placing temporary artist-designed pianos in parks and public spaces. The temporary placement timeline is called a "public residency," after which the pianos are placed permanently within a school or non-profit organization. The Sing for Hope Pianos provided the attached project summary, budget, and timeline. Exhibit A and B.

### **Proposed Project Summary**

The Sing for Hope Pianos program offers a year-continuum of creative community-building in four dynamic stages:

Stage 1: RFP & Artist Selection Process

- SFH shares Request for Proposals (RFP) via cultural and educational networks.
- Proposals from artists are submitted and processed by SFH.
- SFH convenes an outside adjudication panel with participants from leading cultural and community-based organizations.
- Artist selections are made and communicated.

#### Stage 2: Artwork Creation

- Chosen artists convene at Sing for Hope Piano Art Studio (or alternative local site mutually determined with partnering organizations) to create their piano artworks.
- SFH piano technicians and studio managers ensure smooth artistic creation process.
- SFH staff maintain supplies, including artist paints from sponsor Liquitex.
- Post-painting, SFH staff applies plaques, weatherizes instrument via finishing, and affixes specially designed rain tarp.

#### Stage 3: Public Residency (including Launch Event)

- Sing for Hope Pianos kick off with a public Launch Event, our one-day open festival of “art for all” with pianos in a public space open for all to enjoy, featuring special performances by leading artists and community groups alike.
- SFH Pianos are then moved out to parks and public spaces for anyone and everyone to play, amplifying our partners’ reach and engagement.
- SFH Pianos remain open for anyone and everyone to enjoy for 3 weeks, featuring scheduled and spontaneous musical moments, countless social media shares, etc.
- Each location is chosen in tandem with city officials and co-managed daily by our consortium of Sing for Hope Piano Buddies and city parks managers, BIDS, community organizations, and local business owners.

#### Stage 4: Permanent Home & Ongoing Programming (including Ribbon-Cutting)

- After their public residency, the SFH Pianos are transported back to the SFH Pianos Art Studio to be retouched and tuned.
- SFH Pianos are then moved to selected under-resourced schools, hospitals, and/or community-based organizations to become hubs for future programming.
- SFH Pianos are presented to their new permanent homes in special Ribbon-Cutting events with communities.
- In NYC, SFH Pianos are now in 220+ public schools, serving 100,000+ students and community members.
- SFH Pianos live on forever in their new community homes, sparking imagination via our ongoing programs and igniting creativity year-round.

At the March 15, 2022, AiPP Committee meeting, the Committee discussed the Community Piano activation referral. The AiPP Committee made a motion to postpone the overall discussion while acknowledging the worthwhile gesture and spirit of the program. The Committee felt this program was not a true Art in Public Place project and did not to support this activation financially but would advise on placement and artistic choices should funding be identified.

### **ANALYSIS**

Community Piano programs have been activated in cities across the U.S. to encourage community engagement. The pianos are generally available to beginners and experts alike and are painted by local visual artists.

On December 1-4, 2011, the Pop-Up Miami Piano 2011, a privately funded temporary public project by the Black Key Group, was unveiled. Eleven pianos, donated by Steinway Piano Gallery of Miami, were set up in public spaces throughout Miami-Dade County – including a spot outside The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, which is in the middle of a master planning process to ensure the arts remain the central force in its downtown neighborhood development.

Pop-Up Miami Piano 2011 public art project was made possible by Whitney Lykins and Isabella Acker, co-founders of The Black Key Group and a host committee of local professionals who assisted in creating, executing, and engaging the Steinway Piano Gallery of Miami. In addition, the program received additional generous support from Tobias Hamilton's Professional Piano Service, who provided the logistics and transportation of the pianos. They took inspiration from Sing For Hope, which set up street pianos in New York City in 2010. Pop-Up Miami Piano 2011 host committee selected ten (10) local visual artists to customize each piano and curated live "pop-up" performances for December 1-4, 2011.

#### Community Piano Program in Miami Beach

A potential Community Piano Program as a creative placemaking program would bring vibrancy and encourage pedestrian engagement in the city's commercial corridors and neighborhoods that include Ocean Drive, Washington Avenue, Lincoln Road, 41<sup>st</sup> Street and Normandy Fountain Plaza.

#### Proposed Locations

The referral memorandum requested the proposed Community Piano program be placed in locations in South and North Beach neighborhoods. Potential locations for a community piano in South Beach neighborhood would be Lummus Park, Española Way, and Lincoln Road. In the North Beach neighborhood, potential locations include the Normandy Fountain Plaza, Bandshell Park or Altos del Mar Park. Also, a Community Piano should be considered for entrance to the 41<sup>st</sup> Street Corridor in Harry Liebman Square. Staff recommends engaging with the impacted neighborhood associations to receive input and buy-in on the Community Piano Program.

#### Potential Cost

Based on the proposal from Sing for Hope Pianos from 2022, the potential cost for a temporary Community Piano program may range from approximately \$50,000 to \$108,000. Iterations of similar programs have received funding solely from a private source or a combination of private and arts grant funding.

Should it be the desire of the Mayor and City Commission to create a potential temporary Community Piano Program, the Administration recommends that it be temporary in nature in line with previous activations of such a program throughout the country, including Miami-Dade County. In addition, funding would need to be identified during the FY 2026 budget process.

### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Administration recommends that while the PSNQLC evaluates the proposal of Community Pianos, 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 recent notification of a \$5-6 million annual budget impact on the General Fund due to the new 2% collection fee imposed by the Miami-Dade Tax Collector;
4. 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 Community Pianos align with the City's broader long-term financial stability and strategic priorities. If the Committee recommends funding the program, the Administration recommends it be considered as part of the FY 2026 budget process. Potential fiscal impact estimate is \$50,000 to \$108,000.

### **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-notices/>

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **CONCLUSION**

The Administration recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee discuss the installation of a "Community Piano" program, along with proposed locations for one (1) piano in South Beach and one (1) in North Beach. Should the Committee have a favorable recommendation to fund a potential temporary Community Piano program, the Administration recommends that it be temporary in nature in line with previous activations of such a program throughout the country, including Miami-Dade County, and be considered as part of the FY 2026 budget process.

### **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**

Tourism and Culture

### **Sponsor(s)**

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

### **Co-sponsor(s)**

### **Condensed Title**

Discuss the installation of a "Community Piano," along with proposed locations for one piano in South Beach and one in North Beach