

11. DISCUSS DEDICATED BUS LANES ON WASHINGTON AVE.

Applicable Area:

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee Members
FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager
DATE: November 25, 2024
TITLE: DISCUSS DEDICATED BUS LANES ON WASHINGTON AVE.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Administration ("Administration") supports and recommends advancing the feasibility studies, design, and implementation of dedicated bus lanes along Washington Avenue from 5 Street to 17 Street/Miami Beach Convention Center area, pursuant to the City's adopted Transportation Master Plan, the Miami-Dade County Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit ("SMART") Plan, and the adopted Art Deco Cultural District ("ADCD") Vision Plan.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

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

The SMART Plan is a comprehensive transit expansion strategy for Miami-Dade County ("County"), with the primary goal of providing a robust transit network with enhanced connectivity, sustainability, and service coverage. One of the key features of the SMART Plan is the Bus Express Rapid Transit ("BERT") Network, which is designed to provide reliable and convenient express bus service, improve travel times, and reduce congestion on major corridors. Buses on the BERT Network will operate on the express lanes, managed lanes and shoulders of expressways, and dedicated bus lanes, so buses can travel at a higher speed than the adjacent vehicular traffic. Attachment A includes the BERT Network Fact Sheet.

As part of the BERT Network, three (3) routes are proposed to connect the City of Miami Beach ("City") to the mainland (Beach Express North, Beach Express Central, and Beach Express South). In particular, the Beach Express South BERT proposes to connect the Miami Beach Convention Center to Miami Central Station in Downtown Miami via Washington Avenue, 5 Street, and the MacArthur Causeway (see pages 2 and 6 of Attachment A depicting the route alignment). Dedicated bus lanes are proposed along Washington Avenue through the repurposing of one (1) travel lane in each direction. The addition of dedicated bus lanes is consistent with the goals of the BERT Network element of the SMART Plan, which prioritize high-speed, efficient bus service along major corridors, and contribute to reducing congestion and carbon emissions in the region.

ANALYSIS

The Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works ("DTPW") prepared a traffic analysis, entitled the "Washington Avenue Dynamic Traffic Analysis" ("DTA") to evaluate the level of vehicular traffic diversion from Washington Avenue to Collins Avenue and adjacent local streets as a result of repurposing an existing travel lane in each direction to create dedicated bus lanes along Washington Avenue. The Washington Avenue DTA has been reviewed by both the Transportation and Mobility Department and the Florida Department of Transportation

("FDOT"). Currently, FDOT has requested that DTPW conduct additional traffic analysis; and DTPW is in the process of developing the scope of services for the additional analysis necessary to complete a comprehensive DTA. While DTPW has not provided a timeline for completion of the additional analysis, DTPW will continue to work closely with FDOT and the City to ensure a thorough and accurate assessment of the traffic impacts resulting from creating dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue.

On February 23, 2022, the City Commission adopted Resolution 2022-32056 adopting the ADCD Vision Plan in concept and authorizing the Administration to move forward with the implementation of the ADCD Vision Plan for Ocean Drive, with the inclusion of Lummus Park. The ADCD Vision Plan proposes Washington Avenue as a direct access transit street with dedicated bus lanes in the center of the roadway, one (1) travel lane in each direction for general use traffic, and a protected bicycle lane on both sides of the street.

Pursuant to the ADCD Vision Plan, the City has programmed a future corridor improvement project along Washington Avenue ("Washington Avenue Corridor Project" or "Project") as part of the City's 2022 General Obligation Bond ("GOB") Program, allocating \$10 million for the proposed improvements. Attachment B includes a Project description. It is important to note, however, that the Project is currently underfunded and design has not been initiated. The Project is an integral component of a larger urban development plan aimed at rejuvenating the City's iconic ADCD in South Beach. The proposed transformation envisions a multifaceted approach to accommodate various transportation modes effectively. Consistent with the adopted ADCD Vision Plan, the Project will include dedicated bus lanes, raised cycle tracks on both sides of the street for cyclists' safety, and curb management on the east side, allowing for on-street parking, loading zones, ride-share spaces, and convenient pick-up/drop-off areas.

The Administration applied for grant funding under the 2024 County Incentive Grant Program to supplement the existing GOB funds in the Project and potentially advance the construction of the above-ground improvements, including the dedicated bus lanes. However, the City's application was not selected for funding. The Administration will resubmit an application for the dedicated transit lanes on Washington Avenue under the same grant program in 2025.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

CONCLUSION

This item is being presented to the LUSC for discussion.

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): N/A

Department

Transportation and Mobility

Sponsor(s)

Vice-Mayor Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss Dedicated Bus Lanes on Washington Avenue.



COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO:	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM:	Commissioner Alex Fernandez
DATE:	June 26, 2024
TITLE:	REFERRAL TO THE LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS DEDICATED BUS LANES ON WASHINGTON AVE.

RECOMMENDATION

Over the years the City has explored different options for dedicated bus lanes along Washington Avenue, including creating lanes within the median, as well as adjacent to the sidewalks.

I would like the LUSC to discuss different options for dedicated bus lanes on Washington Avenue, as well as how to facilitate the implementation of such lanes. The LUSC previously discussed incentives for residential development on Washington Avenue, including modifying minimum off-street parking requirements and increasing FAR for non-transient residential projects. These incentives will likely result in the need for additional transportation options than what is currently available.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

ANALYSIS

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?
(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

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

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

Applicable Area

South Beach

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pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

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Department

Office of Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)



BUS EXPRESS RAPID TRANSIT (BERT) NETWORK FACT SHEET

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Bus Express Rapid Transit (BERT) Network is a system of eight new express bus routes that are part of the Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit (SMART) Plan. Through the BERT Network, the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) will provide reliable and convenient express bus service connecting commuters to and from the six SMART Plan Rapid Transit Corridors and major employment centers. The BERT Network is designed for commuters with limited stops over long distances, providing a money-saving stress-free transportation option.



Buses on the BERT Network will run on the express lanes, managed lanes and shoulders of expressways, so they run at a higher speed than traffic. When not on the expressways, the buses will rely on Transit Signal Priority (TSP) to minimize traffic delays. TSP technology allows buses to communicate with traffic signals as the bus approaches. The signal can either extend the green or shorten the red to keep the bus moving. These operations will deliver a more reliable service with bus frequency ranging from every 10 to 20 minutes during peak hours.



SCHEDULE

Routes are being phased in over time between 2019 and 2027 as construction of Park and Ride facilities and managed lanes and other infrastructure improvements are completed.

FUNDING

New Park and Ride facilities and new transit vehicles will be funded by Miami-Dade County, in partnership with the Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust and the Florida Department of Transportation.

STAY INFORMED

For more information, contact Public Information Officer Yvette Holt at 786-714-2792 or by email at BERT@miamidade.gov.



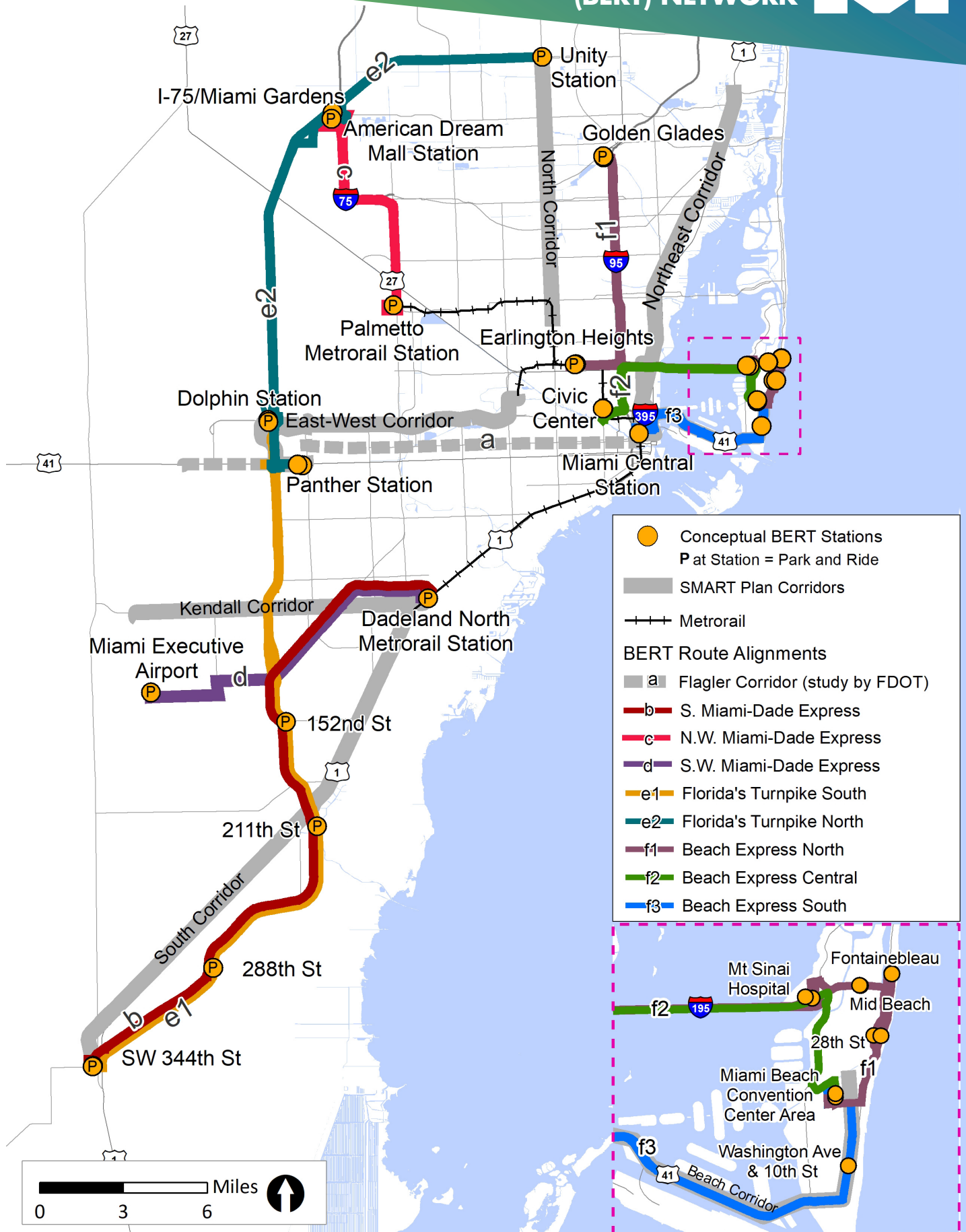
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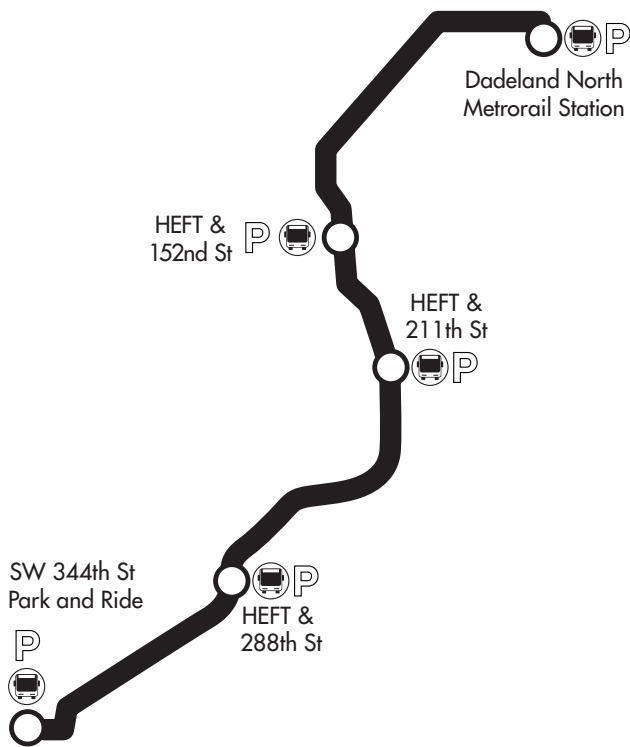
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BUS EXPRESS RAPID TRANSIT (BERT) NETWORK

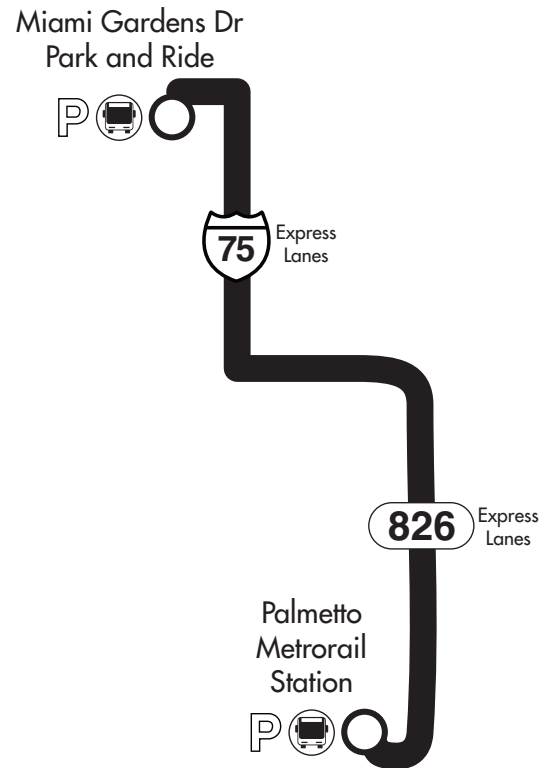


ROUTE B SOUTH MIAMI-DADE EXPRESS



From the SW 344th Street TransitWay Station to the Dadeland North Metrorail Station along the Florida's Turnpike Managed Lanes. Service is expected to begin in 2021. In the future, stops will be added when new Park and Ride facilities are built. Preliminary locations include the SW 288th Street/HEFT, SW 211th Street/HEFT, and SW 152nd Street/HEFT.

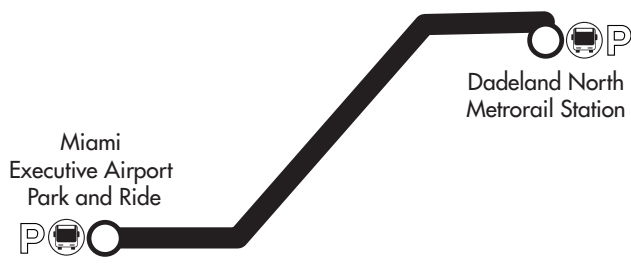
ROUTE C NORTHWEST MIAMI-DADE EXPRESS



From the Palmetto Metrorail Station to the I-75/ Miami Gardens Drive Park and Ride. This service began in November 2019 and runs on the SR 826 and I-75 Express Lanes.

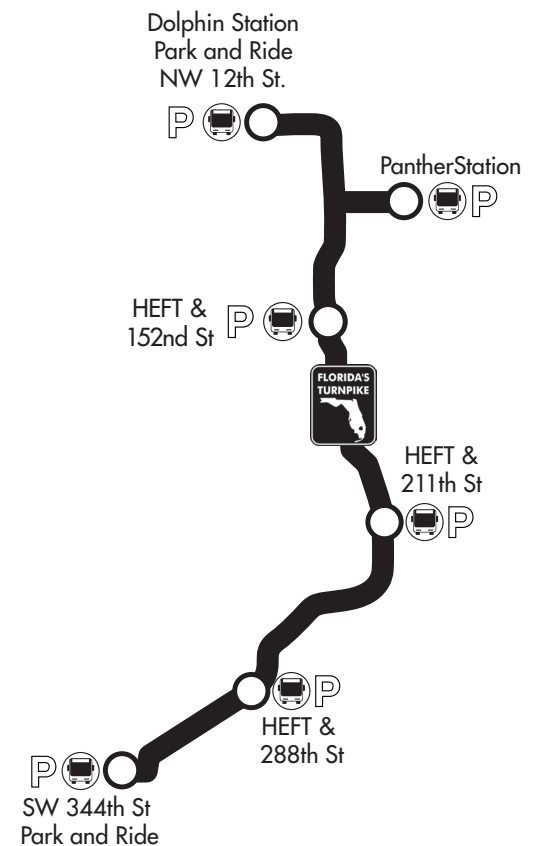


ROUTE D SOUTHWEST MIAMI-DADE EXPRESS



From a planned new Park and Ride facility on SW 136th Street on the south side of the Miami Executive Airport to the Dadeland North Metrorail Station. Service is expected to begin in 2023 after the opening of the new Park and Ride.

ROUTE E1 FLORIDA TURNPIKE EXPRESS SOUTH



From the SW 344th Street TransitWay station to the Dolphin Station Park and Ride. Service is expected to begin in 2021. In the future, stops will be added when new Park and Ride facilities are built at SW 288th Street/HEFT, SW 211th Street/HEFT, SW 152nd Street/HEFT and the FIU Panther Station.



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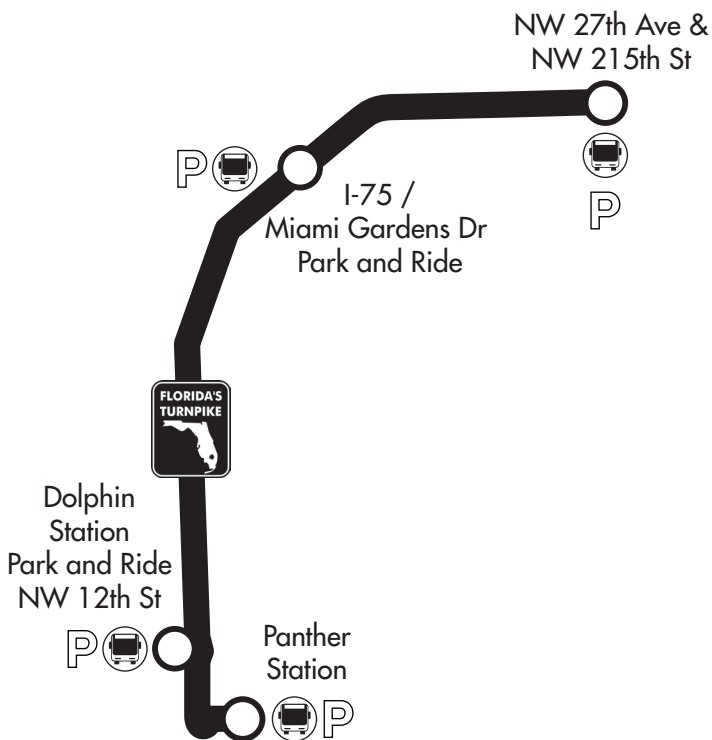


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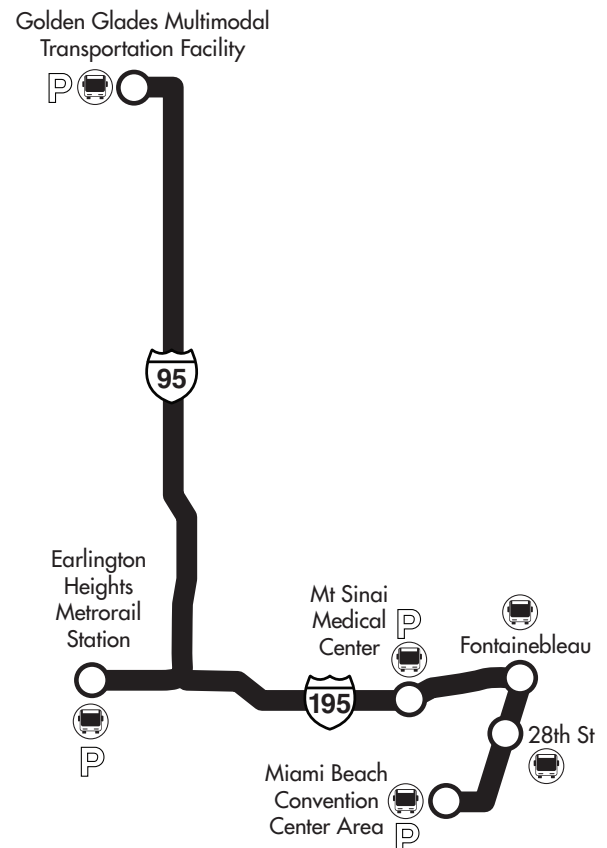


ROUTE E2 FLORIDA TURNPIKE EXPRESS NORTH



From the future FIU Panther Station Park and Ride to the I-75/Miami Gardens Drive Park and Ride. Service date is anticipated in 2027, in line with the construction of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise's managed lanes.

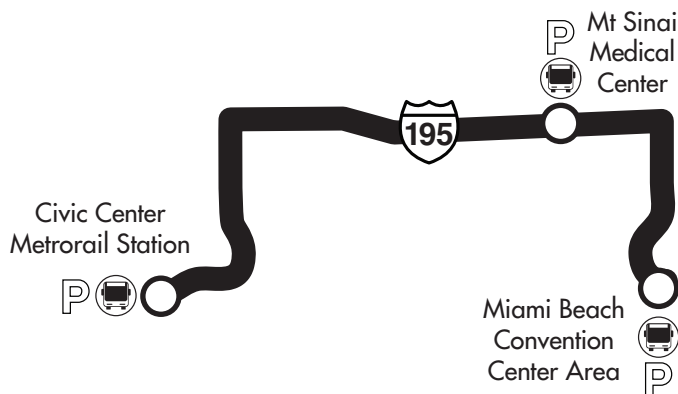
ROUTE F1 BEACH EXPRESS NORTH



From the Golden Glades Intermodal Facility to the Miami Beach Convention Center with stops at the Earlington Heights Metrorail Station and a planned new Mount Sinai Medical Center Park and Ride. Service is expected to begin in 2023 when construction of the inside shoulders of the SR 112/I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway is complete.

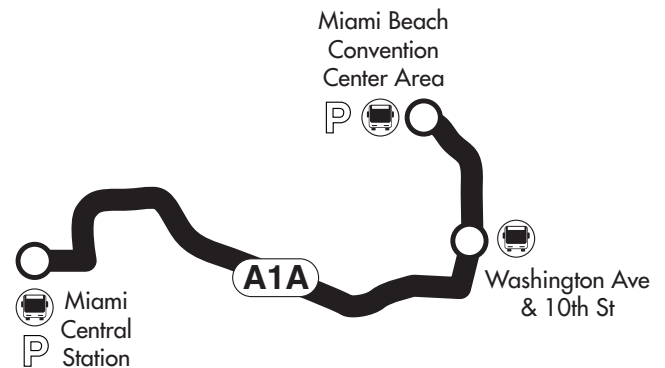
As an interim service beginning in 2021, bus routes that currently run along SR 112/I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway will run on the outside shoulders to bypass traffic when the travel speed in the regular lanes is below 35 mph. The service will move to the inside shoulders once construction is completed in 2023.

ROUTE F2 BEACH EXPRESS CENTRAL



From the Civic Center Metrorail Station to the Miami Beach Convention Center with a stop at the planned Mount Sinai Medical Center Park and Ride. Service is expected in 2023 after the completion of I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway shoulder construction.

ROUTE F3 BEACH EXPRESS SOUTH



From the Miami Central Station to the Miami Beach Convention Center. Service is expected in 2023.



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NEIGHBORHOODS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

PROJECT: WASHINGTON AVENUE CORRIDOR

COST: \$10 MILLION

Department: Tourism, Culture, and Economic Development

Washington Avenue is a critical commercial corridor in South Beach; recently, a Business Improvement District was formed for Washington Avenue, with the goal to better improve the district through infrastructure and programming initiatives that will help revitalize and increase the economic vitality and vibrancy along the corridor. The City is working collectively with the Washington Avenue BID to find creative interventions that allow for residents and tourists to gather and activate the corridor throughout the day and evening hours.

The City will be issuing an RFQ to retain an urban design firm to create a comprehensive vision and identity for Washington Avenue that promotes pedestrian activity and supports the principles of creative place making, with a focus on resident, business and tourist uses and spaces that stimulate public/private partnerships that contribute to the maintenance, development and promotion of and in the corridor. This RFQ was issued in August 2018.

This funding allocation would be used to invest in capital improvements, lighting and landscaping along Washington Avenue to increase vibrancy and business retention through construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancement, community programming and marketing the area.