MIAMIBEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DATE: September 14, 2022

SUBJECT: **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 JULY 27, 2022 MEETING, APPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION TO MODIFY THE CURRENT BEACHWALK SAFETY PILOT PROGRAM FROM 15 TO 24 STREET AS PER ATTACHMENT B, CONSISTING OF A WHITE SOLID LINE ALONG THE APPROXIMATE CENTERLINE OF THE BEACHWALK WITH DIRECTIONAL ARROWS AND SYMBOLS/SIGNS ON BOTH SIDES GUIDING ALL USERS TO KEEP RIGHT WHILE WALKING AND BIKING.**

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission adopt the Resolution.

BACKGROUND

The City's beachwalk is a highly utilized shared-use path that serves recreational and work trips throughout the City. It is the public trail with the highest volume of activity in Florida; however, its popularity coupled with its constrained width contributes to frequent conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users. An additional concern for residents as well as the Administration is the intermixing of pedestrians and unauthorized motorized/electric devices, including electric stand-up scooters, electric bikes, and electric skateboards, among other motorized devices operating illegally on the beachwalk. Although Section 70-67 of the City Code prohibits motorized means of transportation on the beachwalk, among other pedestrian facilities throughout the City, the growing popularity of these electric devices poses a concern for pedestrians and an enforcement challenge for Police.

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Neighborhood and Quality of Life Committee (NQLC) at its March 4, 2020 meeting, various city departments, including Police, Communications, Property Management, and Transportation and Mobility, collaborated to develop a holistic approach to address the pedestrian safety concern on the beachwalk through better signage and enhanced enforcement. This effort resulted in the installation of 142 new regulatory signs along the beachwalk and at all beachwalk entrance points to assist Police and Park Rangers with enforcing applicable provisions of the City Code. In addition, the City installed 70 advisory signs along the beachwalk to advise users that the area is a pedestrian-friendly zone where permitted/non-motorized devices such as bicycles, skates, and skateboards must slow down and yield to pedestrians.

In March 2021, the Miami Beach Police Department initiated a daily beachwalk pedestrian safety detail entitled "Clear Path". Since the beginning of 2022, Police Officers and Park Rangers have conducted regular enforcement of the beachwalk, including enforcement of Section 70-67 of the City code prohibiting motorized means of transportation on the beachwalk.

At the July 21, 2021 NQLC meeting, to further enhance pedestrian safety on the beachwalk, Transportation and Mobility Department staff presented a preliminary concept for a potential pilot project consisting of segregating cyclists and pedestrians through striping and signage along a typical 15' wide section of the beachwalk between 15 Street and 24 Street (Attachment A).

At the July 27, 2022 PSNQLC meeting, the Administration provided an update on the pilot program. While the original goal of the pilot program was to achieve the separation of pedestrians and bicyclists on the beachwalk, data analysis and field observations conducted by the City staff concluded that separation between the modes is not viable due to the high amount of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling in opposing directions within a constrained space, as well as user expectations and behavior. In light of staff's analysis, observations, and user feedback, the Administration recommended discontinuing the pilot and implementing a modified pilot configuration from 15 Street to 24 Street consisting of a white solid line along the approximate centerline of the beachwalk with directional arrows and signs on both sides guiding all users to keep right while walking and biking (Attachment B). While the recommended modified configuration will not achieve the original goal of mode separation, staff believes that it is more intuitive and will provide a better configuration for pedestrians and bicyclists to share the same space while traveling in the same direction. The recommended configuration relies on the basic rules of the road where slower traffic stays to the right and faster traffic passes on the left. To supplement the painted markings, staff will install contextual signage in accordance with the recommended pilot configuration. The PSNQLC approved the Administration's recommendation by acclamation.

ANALYSIS

Since the onset of the initial pilot program, Transportation and Mobility Department staff has conducted field observations, reviewed user feedback, and collected and analyzed data, including volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the pilot segment and user compliance with the pilot demarcation (i.e. number of pedestrians encroaching into the bicycle space and number of bicyclists encroaching into the pedestrian space).

Pedestrian and bicycle volumes were evaluated for three consecutive days (May 31 to June 2), at three locations (15th, 20th, and 21st streets), during both morning peak (7AM – 9AM) and afternoon peak (5PM – 7PM). The data showed a 60% higher usage in the afternoon as compared to the morning hours. For both morning and afternoon peak periods, the data showed that the volume of pedestrians is three times greater than the number of bicyclists and that pedestrians frequently intruded into the bicycle space (and vice-versa). User feedback was overwhelmingly negative.

CONCLUSION

In light of staff's analysis, observations, and user feedback, at the July 27, 2022 PSNQLC meeting, the Administration recommended discontinuing the pilot and implementing a modified pilot configuration from 15 Street to 24 Street consisting of a white solid line along the centerline of the beachwalk with directional arrows and symbols/signs on both sides guiding all users to

keep right while walking and biking. The PSNQLC approved the Administration's recommendation by acclamation.

The signage and pavement markings associated with the prior pilot program were removed on August 24, 2022. Staff is finalizing the design of the contextual signage to be implemented as part of the new pilot program. Subject to City Commission approval of this Resolution, the Administration will implement the modified pilot within four (4) weeks and will continue to monitor user compliance and evaluate the effectiveness of the modified pilot program. Any further modifications to the pilot program will be communicated to the Mayor and City Commission via Letter to Commission (LTC).

STRATEGIC CONNECTION

Improve the walking and biking experience.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

According to the 2022 Miami Beach Resident Survey, the second most important capital improvement project type is more walking/biking friendly streets, greenways, and paths (56.8%). According to the same survey, 56.5% of residents walk as one of their primary modes of transportation within the City, and for 27.8% of residents, walking is the primary mode of getting around within the City. For 25% of residents surveyed, biking was one of the top three most viable alternatives to using a car for trips within the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for the recommended modified pilot project is included in the Transportation and Mobility Department's FY 2021/2022 Operating Budget.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Account number: 106-9615-000349-30-403-529-00-00-00-

ATTACHMENTS:

A: Initial pilot project configuration and contextual signage
B: Recommended modified pilot project configuration and contextual signage