

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager *RW*

DATE: April 17, 2024

SUBJECT: **DISCUSS UPCOMING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY VENETIAN CAUSEWAY BRIDGE PROJECTS.**

HISTORY:

At its December 13, 2023 meeting, the City Commission approved a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to discuss the upcoming Miami-Dade County Venetian Causeway Bridge Projects.

The Venetian Causeway Bridge Replacement project consists of ten fixed span bridges and two bascule leaf span bridges over the Intracoastal Waterway (ICWW) (Bridge Identification No.'s 874459, 874460, 874461, 874463, 874465, 874466, 874471, 874472, 874473, 874474, 874477, and 874481) extending from North Bayshore Drive (City of Miami) to Purdy Avenue (City of Miami Beach). For ease of identification, the bridges are numbered 1 through 12, with Bridge 1 being the westernmost bridge and Bridge 12 the easternmost bridge.

The project will address identified structural and functional deficiencies of the 10 existing low-level fixed span bridges and the east bascule bridge via replacement of the bridges. The project, once completed, will increase the safety and resiliency of the bridges, maintain the aesthetics of the causeway, and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

At its February 14, 2024 meeting, Public Works presented an update to Committee members with regards to the Venetian Project:

- Miami-Dade County has submitted its 60% plans for the Venetian Causeway, for the replacement of the bridges.
- Permitting and design phase is expected to be completed by December 2025.
- The construction award is expected start in January 2026 and the process will take approximately from 8-12 months.

- The construction is expected to take approximately 5 years as it must be completed by segments and/or phases.

At the end of the discussion, Committee members made a motion to have the item be brought to Committee in April with an update and proposed recommendations such as implementing a higher toll or limiting access to residents only as well as a request by Commissioner Magazine to have Public Works assess mass transit options that do not require significant infrastructure projects.

The following is an analysis of additional requests made by the Committee.

- **Higher tolling during construction:** The current tolls on the Venetian Causeway are controlled by Miami-Dade County under an agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation's Sun Pass system. The tolls collected are used for the maintenance and operations of the existing bridges and will be used to pay for a portion of debt service once the bridges are replaced. Establishing higher tolls during construction would require approval by Miami-Dade County commission.
- **Limiting access to residents during construction:** Limiting access to residents only will be extremely challenging. This would require on-site enforcement by Miami Beach Police Department on a twenty-four hour / seven day per week schedule to enforce this restriction. Since this project has a contract duration of 5 years, this will add significant costs to the project. As this would be a City requirement to restrict access for residents, the County will likely ask the City to pay for this cost.
- **Mass transit options that do not require significant infrastructure projects:** There is currently one Miami-Dade Transit bus route that services the Venetian Causeway; route no. 15. It travels from 23rd Street and Dade Boulevard and long 17th St and the Sunset Harbour area before in enters the Venetian Causeway and travels to the Omni Bus/Metro Transit station before making its return trip. It operates on a 30-minute headway from 6 AM to 7 PM and a 60-minute headway from 7 PM to 12 AM and during the weekends it varies from 30 to 60-minute headways depending on the time of the day. During the construction of the Venetian Causeway, a modified schedule should be explored to provide more frequent headways during peak weekday times (6AM - 9AM, 12PM - 2PM and 4PM - 7PM) to alleviate traffic congestion by reducing single occupant vehicles (SOVs).

CONCLUSION:

A verbal report with most recent updates and recommendations will be presented on the dais.

Applicable Area

South Beach

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Commission referral to Neighborhoods

Type

Other