MIAMIBEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Commissioner Alex Fernandez
DATE: February 21, 2024

SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE CITY'S 2015 MODAL PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY.

RECOMMENDATION

Please place on the February 21, 2024, agenda a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to review and discuss the City's Modal Prioritization Strategy established in 2015 as part of the Transportation Master Plan. This strategy, initially aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive transportation by prioritizing pedestrians, transit, bicycles, and freight in that order, with private automobiles being the last priority, requires a critical reassessment in light of the evolving needs of our city and the advancements in transportation technology.

While the intentions behind this prioritization were aligned with fostering a more sustainable and inclusive urban environment, the evolving transportation landscape and the pressing needs of our residents necessitate a reassessment of this strategy. It has become increasingly clear that the original master plan, despite its noble intentions, is contributing to a decline in the quality of life for our residents. **Many residents report feeling trapped in their homes or in traffic congestion regularly after 3 p.m. due to gridlock, highlighting a critical misalignment between our transportation policy and the current needs of our city.**

In response to these challenges, last year, I sponsored legislation requesting the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to reinstate the dual southbound right turn lanes at the intersection of Indian Creek Drive/41 Street. This measure aims to alleviate the chronic traffic gridlock at this major intersection. This improvement is set to commence construction later this year as part of an upcoming resurfacing project.

In April 2023, I had the sponsored a resolution that was adopted by the City Commission, pertaining to the FDOT Collins Avenue Multimodal Corridor Study. This pivotal study aimed at enhancing mobility across multiple modes of transportation within the corridor stretching from 44th Street to 60th Street, with a focus on extending logical connections to 41st Street and 63rd Street. The recommendations from this study included the proposal to transition into the design development phase, with plans to remove the frontage road while maintaining the current number of travel lanes on Collins Avenue. Additionally, the study proposed the introduction of a

separated two-way bike path along the west side of Collins Avenue, adjacent to the Indian Creek waterway, and the expansion of sidewalks to enhance walkability. Separately and subsequently, in September 2023, I sponsored a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to explore the feasibility of implementing on bicycle lane as part of the anticipated FDOT Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation project on Collins Avenue, extending from 63rd to 75th Street.

Furthermore, recognizing the urgent need to address traffic congestion, Mayor Steven Meiner (then commissioner) and I sponsored initiatives leading to the amendment of the FY 2023 budget. This amendment included the hiring of 10 public service specialists, akin to Traffic Service Aides, dedicated to mitigating traffic concerns. As of now, the recruitment process for these positions is nearing completion, which will enhance our capacity to manage traffic flows more effectively until their full deployment.
Additionally, I have championed the Chase Avenue and 34th Street Shared-Use Path, a Priority 1 project in the Transportation Master Plan. This project is integral to our broader efforts to enhance connectivity around the Miami Beach Golf Club, thereby promoting alternative modes of transportation.

I have also engaged in efforts to incentivize the use of bicycles through the provision of free monthly rides as part of the Deco Bikes program for residents who are not Citi Bike members. This initiative represents a step towards encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation.

Despite these measures, and others engaged in by the City, the challenges we face with traffic congestion and mobility necessitate a fundamental reassessment of our transportation priorities. **As such, it is imperative that we revisit our Transportation Master Plan with a view to re-prioritizing vehicular traffic to better reflect the current and future needs of our residents.** This will not only address the immediate concerns related to traffic congestion but also ensure that our transportation policies are aligned with the goal of promoting safety, sustainability, and equitable access to mobility options for all residents.

I urge the committee to consider this referral as a matter of urgency, to ensure that our city's transportation strategy is responsive to the needs of our community and supports the overall quality of life in Miami Beach.

Thank you.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

na

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

na

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right **Does this item utilize G.O.**

to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?	Bond Funds?
Yes	No

Legislative Tracking
Commissioner Alex Fernandez

ATTACHMENTS:

	Description
🗋	Commission Memorandum

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