

MIAMIBEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC#

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 1, 2018

SUBJECT: **Citywide Re-entry Program**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this LTC is to advise you of progress on the development of a re-entry program that serves all City departments, residents, businesses and visitors. This program addresses the coordination of the safe and orderly return to Miami Beach following an event that would require evacuation.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), originally compiled in 2007, a Re-entry Annex had been developed and written by emergency management staff and then recomposed by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This plan was designed to establish a procedure facilitating re-entry of response and recovery personnel, government officials, critical healthcare staff, businesses, property owners, media and others in order to speed the recovery of the City and its economy.

Although the stated purpose of the document was to "provide uniform guidance to law enforcement who direct access ... and to ensure safe re-entry for all entering the City after an emergency event," the plan was not reviewed nor adopted by the departments tasked with carrying out the procedures. When the time came to implement the program following Hurricane Irma, the task proved to be unmanageable and inconsistently enforced, and information was not sufficiently communicated to the public.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DIRECTION:

At the July 18 meeting of the Neighborhoods meeting, a discussion was held regarding registering and providing special identification to all residents and employees of the city of Miami Beach so that in the event of a hurricane, or other disaster requiring evacuation, there is a way to easily identify residents and employees so they can return to their homes and their jobs expeditiously. This discussion was sponsored by Committee Chair Kristen Rosen Gonzalez and was addressed by Chief Juan Mestas, who is serving as interim director of the Department of Emergency Management.

DEM was directed to develop a program, utilizing vehicle decals to identify permitted entrants for re-entry. The department was asked to bring back information to the next Neighborhoods meeting. As this meeting would not be held until September, and the timing for this program is crucial (already mid-hurricane season), DEM moved forward as quickly as possible to follow through and report via LTC during the August recess.

Emergency Management had begun to re-address the concept of re-entry procedures following Hurricane Irma, but the discussion at Neighborhoods was the impetus to accelerate the process. On July 23, the Department convened meeting with other departments and community

representatives. In attendance at the meeting were the Police and Fire Chiefs and members of their staff, representatives from Transportation, Marketing & Communications, Parking, and Finance. DEM also invited representatives from the public who they felt would provide important feedback in the conversation. This included executives from Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association. Adrian Gonzalez of David's Café and the Miami Beach CERT leader Jeff Gordon were also part of the discussion, providing the perspective of businesses and residents.

The consensus at the meeting was to establish a phased plan that would include operating procedures, distribution of tier-identified decals, and a communications plan.

PROGRESS:

The Department of Emergency Management has researched similar programs in coastal cities of comparable size and population, prepared a preliminary cost analysis and re-written a draft of the re-entry plan. At the September Neighborhoods meeting, the plan will be presented in whatever stage of completion it is in at the time, in order for the Committee to provide guidance for its ratification.

The plan must be reviewed by and input must be received from the various departments who are involved in the implementation.

- Police – overall enforcement, feasibility of plan execution, roadblock coordination
- Fire – safety concerns
- Transportation – coordination with regulatory agencies and traffic flow into the City
- Finance – administration of decal program (fee collection, distribution)
- Communications & Marketing – development of messaging

COST ANALYSIS:

DEM inquired with companies that our Parking Department had used in the past for parking decals about cost. Based on a purchase of 90,000 decals (1,000 for first responders, 1,000 for other emergency responders, hotel and condominium emergency response personnel and 88,000 for residents and businesses) the overall cost for production is approximately \$6,500 for regular decals and up to \$35,000 for reflective decals including the option of printed instructions on the decal backing. This cost does not include the staff time or other administrative costs such as postage and mailing material or advertising. This information is expected to be finalized by the Finance and Marketing & Communications Departments and included in the report to be presented at the Neighborhoods meeting in September. Other cities have charged a processing fee and this can be investigated further in the interest of offsetting costs.

CONCLUSION:

Although a program like this is difficult to execute smoothly, the public safety departments involved in the planning have concluded that the issuance of decals to represent the various tiers or levels of allowed re-entry is the best procedure to assist in the enforcement of this plan. This does not appear to be cost-prohibitive, but may require additional staffing.

Participation and compliance with this program must be supplemented by clear communication. One of the major complaints from the public and those tasked with restricting entry after the storm was that there was conflicting information which led to some confusion about when to and who could re-enter the City. DEM and Communications have been working together to ensure a smoother outflow of information in emergencies, including the implementation of our new MBALERT system. In addition, DEM has conducted an emergency management orientation for Commissioners and their aides, which included guidance about the most efficient flow of information. Elected officials are often the best and most trusted source of information, and your assistance in providing consistent and accurate information helps public safety officials keep our community safe and secure before, during and after disaster.

JM/JRM/SHL