




NO. LTC# **107-2023**

LETTER TO COMMISSION

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

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

  
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DATE: March 4, 2023

SUBJECT: **Ocean Drive Pedestrian Plaza Pilot - Update #2**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (“LTC”) is to provide an update on the permitting status of the Ocean Drive pedestrian promenade located between 13 Street and 14 Place and to provide information on a potential modified operational plan and methodology for the temporary promenade as required by Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (“DTPW”). LTC # 518-2022 dated December 13, 2022 is attached herein for background and reference (Attachment A).

On December 21, 2022, the City Administration and DTPW staff met to discuss DTPW’s concerns with the current configuration of the promenade and associated operational challenges. During the meeting, DTPW staff expressed that a permit for the promenade as currently configured would not be approved and required that the City submit a modified plan to address the operational challenges as well as a traffic methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the modified plan for DTPW’s review and approval. The continuation of the promenade on a pilot basis would be contingent upon the County’s approval of the modified plan. **In more recent communications, DTPW requested that the City submit a modified plan and methodology with the deadline of March 3, 2023.** Included herein is a letter to DTPW dated March 3, 2023 outlining a modified operational plan and methodology for the temporary promenade as required by DTPW (Attachment B).

The Administration acknowledges that there are operational challenges associated with the use of the alleyway as a detour route for Ocean Drive traffic, albeit as a temporary condition, given the essential and frequent back-of-house services for the businesses and hotels in the area; services that cannot currently occur in this section of Ocean Drive due to the pedestrian plaza. It is also important to note that at least one hotel within the pedestrian-only area has threatened litigation related to the as yet unapproved road closure.

Over the past few months, City staff from various departments, including Police, Fire, Transportation and Mobility, Parking, Public Works, and Facilities and Fleet Management have worked together to develop a modified operational plan for the promenade that balances the needs and desires of the affected residents, property owners, businesses, stakeholder groups, City emergency services, and visitors, and which addresses the concerns expressed by DTPW staff both verbally and via letter dated October 25, 2022.

The modified operational plan consists of allowing vehicular traffic to access Ocean Drive via arm gates at 14 Place from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday – Saturday, which aligns with the time periods when most deliveries and services for the affected businesses occur. Smaller size trucks (no more than 33’ long) would be allowed to access the alleyway at Ocean Drive and 14 Place only if required for “back-of-house” services. This operational plan is expected to drastically reduce the volume of delivery trucks and service vehicles which currently cannot access Ocean Drive within the promenade portion and must therefore perform their services from the alleyway. As such, by reducing the number of trucks and service vehicles during the early morning hours

when the bulk of this activity typically occurs, we believe this operational change will address DTPW's concern regarding the volume of vehicles using and potentially blocking the alleyway and the challenges associated with that operation.

With respect to a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of a modified operational plan for the temporary promenade, the City proposes to collect traffic data at 13 Street, 14 Place, and 15 Street along Ocean Drive to document the existing conditions with respect to traffic volumes. If the modified operational plan is approved by DTPW for implementation on a pilot basis, City staff is prepared to collect and analyze post-traffic data and provide to DTPW for use in determining the effectiveness of the modified pilot. In addition, City staff will conduct observations and garner feedback from affected residents, property owners, businesses, patrons, visitors, and workforce with regard to the modified pilot. As contemplated, the City, in collaboration with DTPW, will use this data and feedback to evaluate the pilot and determine if any additional changes to the pilot are warranted to address the County's concerns.

City staff has met with Ocean Drive stakeholders to share the details of the modified operational plan and methodology for the temporary promenade prior to submitting to DTPW for review and approval. As some stakeholders have expressed concerns with allowing vehicles in the promenade, albeit in the early morning hours, and would prefer to maintain the integrity of the current pedestrianized environment, implementation and evaluation of the modified operational plan will require continued community dialogue. While the City has demonstrated a commitment to pedestrianize a portion of Ocean Drive through the implementation of a temporary pedestrian promenade, ultimately the City and Miami-Dade County will need to determine an operational plan that is mutually agreeable.

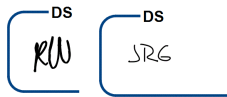
The Administration will continue to provide updates on the County's response and permitting status of the Ocean Drive temporary pedestrian promenade via LTC.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Attachments

A: LTC # 518-2022 dated December 13, 2022

B: Letter to Miami-Dade County DTPW dated March 3, 2023



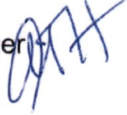
ATH/RW/JRG

# MIAMI BEACH

NO. LTC# **518-2022**

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

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

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager 

DATE: December 13, 2022

SUBJECT: **Update - Ocean Drive Pedestrian Plaza Pilot**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to provide an update on the permitting status of the Ocean Drive pedestrian plaza located between 13 Street and 14 Place.

Pursuant to the Miami-Dade County (the "County") Home Rule Charter and Code, the County's Department of Transportation and Public Works has jurisdiction over traffic control on all local (non-federal or state) public roads and alleyways, including within incorporated municipalities. As such, the closure or reconfiguration of a portion of Ocean Drive for a pedestrian plaza and the use of the 14 Place/Ocean Court alleyway as a detour route requires Miami-Dade County approval.

At the October 27, 2021 City Commission meeting, as part of a discussion item on the reconfiguration of Ocean Drive, the Commission supported the Administration's recommended option to introduce a southbound vehicular travel lane with on-street parking on the west side of the street and two-way protected green bike lanes on the east side of the street. Furthermore, the City Commission requested that the Administration explore the implementation of a pedestrian plaza in the vicinity of the 1400 Block of Ocean Drive.

At the December 8, 2021 City Commission meeting, the Commission directed the Administration to proceed with the implementation of a temporary pedestrian plaza pilot on Ocean Drive from 13 Street to 14 Place. Pursuant to Commission direction, the City's Transportation and Mobility Department developed the corresponding pavement marking, striping, and signage plans in December 2021 and submitted the draft plans to the County for review and approval. The Administration's stated commitment to the City Commission and residents was to implement the desired reconfiguration of Ocean Drive on an expedited basis in January 2022.

In January 2022, the Administration completed implementation of the interim reconfiguration of Ocean Drive, including the temporary pedestrian plaza. At that time, the County had approved the new southbound lane configuration and protected bike lanes; however, the design plans for the pedestrian plaza had not yet been approved as City staff was working to address various technical comments and concerns from the County on the plaza design. In particular, the design of the plaza necessitated reversing the flow of traffic along the Ocean Court alleyway between 13 Street and 14 Place to utilize the alleyway as a detour route for traffic entering Ocean Drive from 15 Street to travel southbound and exit Ocean Drive through the alleyway. The City worked closely with the Ocean Drive Association and installed regulatory and wayfinding signage at strategic locations on the affected streets to deter unnecessary vehicular traffic from entering

Ocean Drive via 15 Street and to inform drivers of the new southbound traffic pattern and the pedestrian plaza.

**As of today, the County has denied the approval of the pedestrian plaza citing the use of the 14 Place/Ocean Court alleyway as a vehicular detour route for the pedestrianized portion of Ocean Drive as the basis for the denial.** Via a letter to the County dated June 21, 2022 (Attachment A), the City emphasized that the 14 Place/Ocean Court alleyway is the only viable alternative route for Ocean Drive traffic entering through 15 Street to by-pass the plaza given u-turns are not feasible once a southbound vehicle reaches the existing access gate at 14 Place. The County responded via a letter dated October 25, 2022 (Attachment B) reaffirming its concerns with the use of the alleyway as a detour route for general traffic and welcoming further discussion with the City on this matter.

The Administration acknowledges that there are operational challenges associated with the use of the alleyway as a detour route for Ocean Drive traffic, albeit as a temporary condition, given the essential and frequent back-of-house services for the businesses and hotels in the area; services that cannot currently occur in this section of Ocean Drive due to the pedestrian plaza. We also note that at least one hotel within the pedestrian-only area has threatened litigation related to the as yet unapproved road closure.

Pursuant to the County's recent letter, the Administration has scheduled a meeting with Miami-Dade County Transportation and Public Works staff to occur on December 21, 2022 to discuss this outstanding issue in further detail and hopefully reach consensus on a path to secure County approval. The Administration will provide an update on the outcome of the meeting via LTC.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Attachments

A: Letter to Miami-Dade County

B: Response Letter from Miami-Dade County

  
ATH/RW/JRG

# MIAMI BEACH

Attachment A

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, [www.miamibeachfl.gov](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov)  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
Tel: 305.673.7010

June 21, 2022

Eulois Cleckley  
Chief Executive Officer and Director  
Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works  
701 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Court  
Miami, FL 33128

**RE: Ocean Drive Pedestrian Plaza (Application No. 2022001803)**

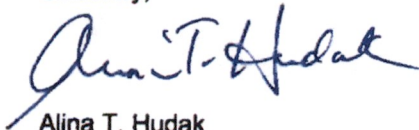
Dear Mr. Cleckley:

I am writing to formally request the Department of Transportation and Public Works' (DTPW) approval for the Ocean Drive pedestrian plaza which extends between 14 Place and 13 Street on Ocean Drive in the City of Miami Beach. As you may be aware, based on discussions with your staff, the City submitted traffic control plans for the pedestrian plaza in the DTPW system in December 2021. Since that time, we have been working with your DTPW staff to secure approval of the plans. At this time, the only outstanding comment from DTPW pertains to the use of a portion of the Ocean Court alleyway as a vehicular detour for the pedestrian plaza.

Given the location of the pedestrian plaza, vehicles entering Ocean Drive from 15 Street to travel southbound along Ocean Drive are being diverted at 14<sup>th</sup> Place through the Ocean Court alleyway to 13 Street where vehicular traffic can access Ocean Drive and continue to travel southbound. The re-routing of vehicles through the Ocean Court alleyway is the only option available to deter vehicles from entering the pedestrian plaza, thereby ensuring the safety and integrity of the plaza and the pedestrians therein. It is important to note that the volume of vehicles being re-routed through the alleyway at this time is relatively minor as we have strategically placed digital message signs along northbound and southbound Collins Avenue to discourage drivers from using 15 Street to enter Ocean Drive due to the presence of the pedestrian plaza.

By way of this letter, we are seeking DTPW's approval and final determination as to the pedestrian plaza as currently configured. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter. Thank you in advance for your assistance and consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,



Alina T. Hudak  
City Manager

cc: Eric T. Carpenter, P.E., Deputy City Manager  
Lester Sola, Assistant City Manager  
Rafael Paz, City Attorney  
José R. González, P.E., Transportation and Mobility Director



**Transportation and Public Works**  
**Office of the Director**  
701 NW 1st Court • 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Miami, Florida 33136

October 25, 2022

Alina Hudak, City Manager  
City of Miami Beach  
1700 Convention Center Drive  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

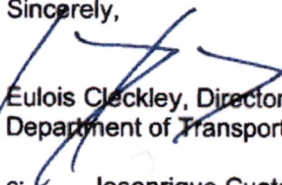
Dear Ms. Hudak

This letter is in response to your June 21, 2022 request for authorization from the Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) to convert a portion of Ocean Drive into a pedestrian plaza. The City submitted DR 2022001903 on December 20, 2021, for "Implementation of a plaza on Ocean Drive between 13th Street and 14th Place". The proposed project included diverting southbound traffic on Ocean Drive from 15th Street to Ocean Court (alleyway) between 14th Place and 13th Street. DTPW denied this permit application as well as subsequent resubmittals as a result of the alleyway presenting several geometric and safety constraints such as impacts to lateral offsets, vertical clearance, sight distance, and substandard turning radii. In addition, our review identified hazardous conditions which include utility conflicts, pedestrian connectivity and lack of emergency vehicles access. The alleyway is not adequately designed to support the vehicular traffic which the closure would generate.

Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works understands your position and desire to reconfigure the public right-of-way in this portion of the City of Miami Beach to encourage pedestrian accessibility and enhance safety. We are eager to engage you and your team in the context of a larger plan to effectuate such an improvement in manner consistent with Miami-Dade County Code and traffic standards. We will make ourselves available to meet and discuss this initiative at your convenience.

Should you require additional information, please contact myself, or Mr. Josenrique Cueto, P.E., Deputy Director

Sincerely,

  
Eulois Cleckley, Director  
Department of Transportation and Public Works

c: Josenrique Cueto, P.E., Deputy Director & Chief Project Delivery Officer, DTPW  
Miguel Soria, P.E., Assistant Director, Highways, DTPW  
Yamilet Senespleda, P.E., Chief, Traffic Engineering Division, DTPW

# MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, [www.miamibeachfl.gov](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov)  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
Tel: 305-673-7010

March 3, 2023

Eulois Cleckley  
Chief Executive Officer and Director  
Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works  
701 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Court  
Miami, FL 33128

RE: Ocean Drive Temporary Pedestrian Plaza (Application No. 2022001803)

Dear Mr. Cleckley:

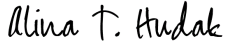
Thanks for your continued support and collaboration on various Miami Beach related traffic efforts. As you are aware, the City of Miami Beach (“City”) has demonstrated a commitment to pedestrianize a portion of Ocean Drive through the implementation of a temporary pedestrian promenade from 13 Street to 14 Place. However, we understand the concerns expressed by Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (“DTPW”) staff with regard to the current operational challenges associated with the current promenade configuration and, in particular, the required use of the 14 Place/Ocean Court alleyway by general use vehicular traffic to by-pass the promenade. Please accept this letter as a step forward in our continued dialogue on this matter subject to further discussions with and approval by our City Commission.

Pursuant to our meeting on December 21, 2022 wherein DTPW staff expressed their concerns with the current promenade, City staff has been working to develop a modified operational plan that balances the needs and desires of the affected businesses, stakeholder groups, city emergency services, residents and visitors, and which addresses the concerns expressed by DTPW staff both verbally and in the letter dated October 25, 2022. The modified plan consists of allowing vehicular traffic to access Ocean Drive via arm gates at 14 Place from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday – Saturday, which aligns with the time periods when most deliveries and services for the affected businesses occur. Smaller size trucks (no more than 33’ long) would be allowed to access the alleyway at Ocean Drive and 14 Place only if required for “back-of-house” services. This operational plan is expected to drastically reduce the volume of delivery trucks and service vehicles which currently cannot access Ocean Drive within the promenade portion and must therefore perform their services from the alleyway. As such, by reducing the number of trucks and service vehicles during the early morning hours when the bulk of this activity typically occurs, we believe this operational change will address DTPW’s concern regarding the volume of vehicles using and potentially blocking the alleyway and the concerns associated with that operation.

With respect to a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of a modified operational plan for the temporary promenade, the City proposes to collect traffic data at 13 Street, 14 Place, and 15 Street along Ocean Drive to document the existing conditions with respect to traffic volumes; and we welcome DTPW’s input in this regard. If the modified operational plan is approved by DTPW for implementation on a pilot basis, City staff is prepared to collect and analyze post-traffic data and provide to DTPW for use in determining the effectiveness of the modified pilot. In addition, City staff will conduct observations and garner feedback from affected residents, businesses, customers, and workforce with regard to the modified pilot. The City, in collaboration with DTPW, will use this data and feedback to evaluate the pilot and determine if any additional changes to the pilot are warranted to address the County’s concerns.

We look forward to continued dialogue with DTPW on ways to ensure the success of this key pilot initiative along our City's most iconic street. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
7AE29EF3401349E...  
Alina T. Hudak  
City Manager

cc: Eric T. Carpenter, P.E., Deputy City Manager, City of Miami Beach  
Rickelle Williams, Assistant City Manager, City of Miami Beach  
José R. González, P.E., Transportation and Mobility Director, City of Miami Beach  
Jimmy L. Morales, Chief Operations Officer, Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor