

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

LTC # 452-2023

LETTER TO COMMISSION

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

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DocuSigned by:
Alina Hudak
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DATE: October 11, 2023

SUBJECT: **Miami-Dade County Better Bus Network – Discontinuation of Route 115**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (“LTC”) is to provide information on the upcoming discontinuation of Route 115 as part of the Miami-Dade County (“County”) Better Bus Network.

The County’s Better Bus Network is a revamp of the regional bus service based on a comprehensive countywide study conducted by the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (“DTPW”) in collaboration with Transit Alliance Miami, a non-profit organization. The Better Bus study was initiated in June 2019 and approved, as amended, by Resolution No. R-920-21 of the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (“BCC”) on October 5, 2021. The Resolution authorized the implementation, by the County, of service adjustments and route changes to the Better Bus Network. The County is planning to launch the approved route changes on November 13, 2023. The changes include several new bus routes in Miami Beach including routes 14, 15, 20, and 100 as well as improvements to service frequency.

As part of the upcoming changes, and based on the County’s analysis, the County will discontinue Route 115 (Attachment A) due to historically low ridership (approximately 140 riders per day) and low productivity. The County is introducing new routes, including Route 14 from Omni Terminal in Miami to Mount Sinai Medical Center via the MacArthur Causeway, Alton Road, South Pointe Drive, Washington Avenue, Collins Avenue, and 41 Street, which will somewhat serve the areas affected by the discontinuation of Route 115. Details and maps of the County-approved route changes to be implemented as part of the County’s Better Bus Network can be found here: ([Better Bus SHIFTS Into Gear \(miamidade.gov\)](https://miamidade.gov/better-bus-shifts)).

Based on the County’s assessment, frequency and reliability of County bus service in Miami Beach is expected to improve overall as a result of the Better Bus Network. However, the City Administration initially and consistently expressed a few concerns with the plan, as originally proposed by the County, including loss of County bus service in the South of Fifth neighborhood and the elimination of Route 115 without providing an alternative transit service for the affected communities, such as an on-demand service.

At the September 17, 2021 City Commission meeting, the City Commission discussed the Better Bus Network, and, in particular, the City Administration’s outstanding concerns with the plan as proposed at that time. The City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2021-31866 (Attachment B) on September 17, 2021, which urged the County to 1) provide reliable transit service in the South

of Fifth neighborhood; 2) provide on-demand transit service in lieu of Route 115; and 3) closely coordinate with City officials any consolidation of bus stops in the City. On September 24, 2021, the City Clerk transmitted a copy of City Commission Resolution No. 2021-31866 to Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, the members of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, and the Director and Chief Executive Officer of DTPW.

Following approval of BCC Resolution No. R-920-21 in October 2021, the County experienced challenges with implementing the amended Better Bus Network countywide. Accordingly, the County proposed a series of service adjustments to implement the majority of the network in or after November 2023. On July 6, 2023, the BCC authorized, via Resolution No. R-607-23, implementation of the bus service adjustments set forth in the revised Better Bus Network. As a result of the City Administration's advocacy and collaboration with DTPW, the County agreed to maintain bus service in the South of Fifth neighborhood as well as Route 150/Airport Express service, which were originally slated to be eliminated. With regard to Route 115, however, the County has remained steadfast in its plans to discontinue the route.

To help mitigate the impact of the County's upcoming discontinuation of Route 115 and provide a suitable public transit option to the affected customers, City staff has been working with DTPW on a plan to augment the City's Freebee on-demand service in the affected area. The enhanced Freebee service would be funded by the County through an Interlocal Agreement with the City. After an evaluation of alternatives, the City Administration believes enhancing the current Freebee service can more efficiently serve the historically low transit demand in the area and provide direct service to Mount Sinai Medical Center. The details of the enhanced Freebee service are currently being developed between City and DTPW staff. In addition, pending further correspondence from DTPW, the City Administration anticipates including an item on the October 18, 2023 City Commission meeting agenda to obtain authorization to implement the enhanced Freebee service concurrently with the County's discontinuation of Route 115 as part of the upcoming launch of the Better Bus Network on November 13, 2023, so as to provide uninterrupted public transit services to the affected community.

The County has advised that it is in the process of providing information to riders and drafting and disseminating notifications, newsletters, and e-blasts with all forthcoming changes to its bus routes and other relevant Better Bus Network information. Once the collateral is received from the County, the City's Marketing and Communications Department will assist with disseminating the information to our community.

If you have any questions, please contact José R. González, P.E., Transportation and Mobility Department Director.

Attachments:

A: Map of Route 115

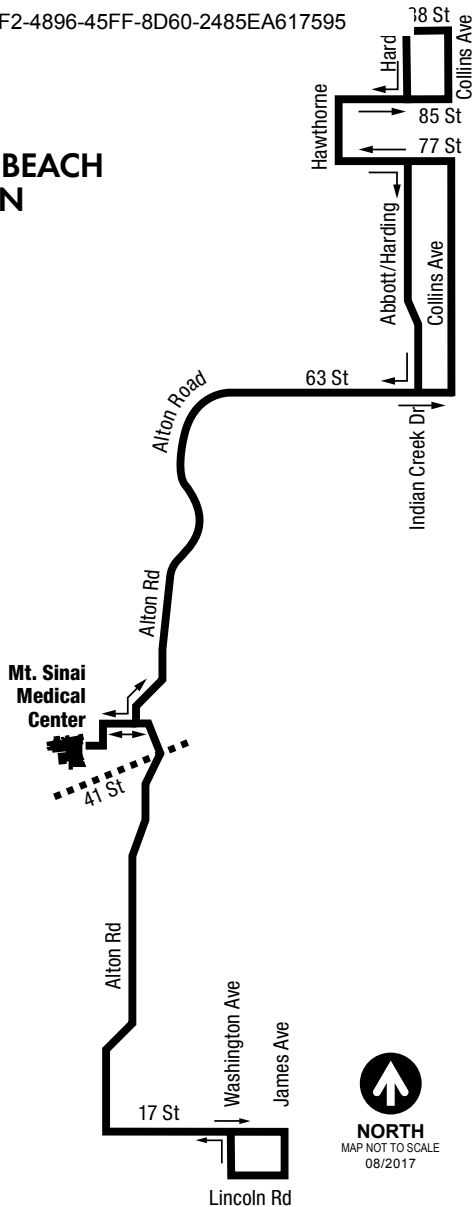
B: City Commission Resolution No. 2021-31866


ATH/RW/JRG



115

MID-NORTH BEACH CONNECTION



NORTH
MAP NOT TO SCALE
08/2017



@GoMiamiDade



GO Miami-Dade Transit

miamidade.gov/transit **311** or 305.468.5900 TTY/Fla Relay: 711



WEEKDAYS | ENTRE SEMANA | LA SEMEN

SOUTHBOUND RUMBO SUR DIREKSYON SID	MORNING MAÑANA / MATIN						AM	PM	AFTERNOON TARDE / APREMIDI							
Collins Ave & 87 St	7:20	8:10	9:00	9:50	10:40	11:30	12:20	1:10	2:00	2:50	3:40	4:30	5:20	6:10	7:00	
Abbott Ave & 69 St	7:34	8:24	9:12	10:02	10:52	11:42	12:32	1:22	2:12	3:02	3:52	4:42	5:32	6:22	7:12	
Mt Sinai Hospital	7:47	8:37	9:25	10:15	11:05	11:55	12:45	1:35	2:25	3:15	4:05	4:55	5:45	6:35	7:22	
Lincoln & Washington	8:04	8:54	9:44	10:34	11:24	12:14	1:04	1:54	2:44	3:34	4:24	5:14	6:04	6:54	7:37	
NORTHBOUND RUMBO NORTE DIREKSYON NÒ	MORNING MAÑANA / MATIN						AM	PM	AFTERNOON TARDE / APREMIDI							
Lincoln & Washington	8:06	8:56	9:46	10:36	11:26	12:16	1:06	1:56	2:46	3:36	4:26	5:16	6:06	6:56		
Mt Sinai Hospital	8:21	9:11	10:00	10:50	11:40	12:30	1:20	2:10	3:00	3:50	4:40	5:30	6:20	7:10		
Collins Ave & 69 St	8:35	9:25	10:14	11:04	11:54	12:44	1:34	2:24	3:14	4:04	4:54	5:44	6:34	7:22		
Collins Ave & 87 St	8:51	9:41	10:30	11:20	12:10	1:00	1:50	2:40	3:30	4:19	5:09	5:59	6:49	7:37		

WEEKENDS | FINES DE SEMANA | WIKENN

SOUTHBOUND RUMBO SUR DIREKSYON SID	MORNING MAÑANA / MATIN						AM	PM	AFTERNOON TARDE / APREMIDI							
	7:20	8:10	9:00	9:50	10:40	11:30			12:20	1:10	2:00	2:50	3:40	4:30	5:20	6:10
Collins Ave & 87 St	7:20	8:10	9:00	9:50	10:40	11:30	12:20	1:10	2:00	2:50	3:40	4:30	5:20	6:10	7:00	
Abbott Ave & 69 St	7:30	8:20	9:11	10:01	10:51	11:41	12:31	1:21	2:11	3:01	3:51	4:41	5:31	6:21	7:10	
Mt Sinai Hospital	7:40	8:30	9:22	10:12	11:02	11:52	12:42	1:32	2:22	3:12	4:02	4:52	5:42	6:32	7:20	
Lincoln & Washington	7:54	8:44	9:38	10:28	11:18	12:08	12:58	1:48	2:38	3:28	4:18	5:08	5:58	6:48	7:33	
NORTHBOUND RUMBO NORTE DIREKSYON NÒ	MORNING MAÑANA / MATIN						AM	PM	AFTERNOON TARDE / APREMIDI							
	7:56	8:46	9:40	10:30	11:20	12:10			1:00	1:50	2:40	3:30	4:20	5:10	6:00	6:50
Lincoln & Washington	7:56	8:46	9:40	10:30	11:20	12:10	1:00	1:50	2:40	3:30	4:20	5:10	6:00	6:50		
Mt Sinai Hospital	8:08	8:58	9:52	10:42	11:32	12:22	1:12	2:02	2:52	3:42	4:32	5:22	6:12	7:02		
Collins Ave & 69 St	8:20	9:11	10:05	10:55	11:49	12:35	1:25	2:15	3:05	3:55	4:46	5:36	6:26	7:13		
Collins Ave & 87 St	8:34	9:25	10:19	11:09	11:59	12:49	1:39	2:29	3:19	4:09	5:00	5:50	6:40	7:25		

Scheduled times are approximate. Actual arrival and departure times may vary depending on traffic and road conditions.

Las horas publicadas son aproximadas, pues dependen del tráfico y otras condiciones de las vías. Ore yo apwoksimatíf. Vre le bis yo ap rive oswa deplase ka varye selon kondisyon sikilasyon sou wout yo.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31866

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, URGING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, IN CONNECTION WITH THE BETTER BUS PROJECT, TO: 1) PROVIDE RELIABLE TRANSIT SERVICE IN THE AREA SOUTH OF FIFTH STREET; 2) PROVIDE ON-DEMAND TRANSIT SERVICE IN LIEU OF BUS ROUTE 115; AND 3) CLOSELY COORDINATE WITH THE CITY OFFICIALS ANY CONSOLIDATION OF THE BUS STOPS IN THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH.

WHEREAS, according to the 2019 Miami Beach Resident Survey, 75% of residents are satisfied with the City's trolley service; however, 63% of residents are using their personal automobiles for trips within Miami Beach; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Miami Beach Business Survey rates transportation as one of the four most significant challenges for the future growth and stability of businesses; and

WHEREAS, according to the same survey, 48% of businesses are satisfied with the effectiveness of public transit for employee commuting; and

WHEREAS, the Better Bus Project is an advocacy-led and community-driven bus system redesign, led by Transit Alliance Miami and the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works; and

WHEREAS, Transit Alliance is a local, non-profit organization advocating for walkable streets, bikeable neighborhoods, and better public transit in Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, the Better Bus Project effort began in June of 2019 and it was an intensive two-year project; and

WHEREAS, a goal of the redesign is to position the system for ridership growth by creating a more effective service; and

WHEREAS, an overall network stands to benefit from several key system-wide improvements such as the increase in high-frequency routes, creating more viable connections, better serving high population/employment centers, resolving low productivity and circuitous routes, and integrating key municipal trolley services; and

WHEREAS, "Design a Better Bus Network" is action item 13 in Resilient 305; and

WHEREAS, on October 30, 2019, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2019-31073 accepting the recommendations of the Neighborhood/Community Affairs Committee (NCAC) and approving conceptually the ridership concept of the Better Bus Network, provided that the South Beach Trolley Service to Belle Isle is retained; and

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2020, the Miami-Dade County (County) project team presented a Draft Plan of the new network to the public; and

WHEREAS, following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County is currently in the final stage of stakeholder engagement and public outreach, and presented the final Better

Bus Network to the County's Transportation, Mobility and Planning Committee on September 13, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the final plan will be voted on by the Board of County Commissioners in October of 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Administration supports changes to the County bus service that would maximize access to jobs, increase ridership, and establish more frequent service for the residents, workforce, and visitors of Miami Beach; and

WHEREAS, the Administration does not support elimination of transit service in South of Fifth neighborhood, and

WHEREAS, the Administration requests that the County implement on-demand transit service in lieu of the Route 115; and

WHEREAS, the Administration also requests that the County closely coordinate consolidation of any bus stops in Miami Beach with City officials.

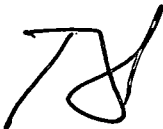
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, that the Mayor and City Commission hereby urge Miami-Dade County, in connection with the Better Bus Project, to: 1) provide reliable transit service in the area South of Fifth Street; 2) provide on-demand transit service in lieu of bus route 115; and 3) closely coordinate with the City officials any consolidation of the bus stops in the City of Miami Beach.

PASSED and ADOPTED this 17th day of September 2021.

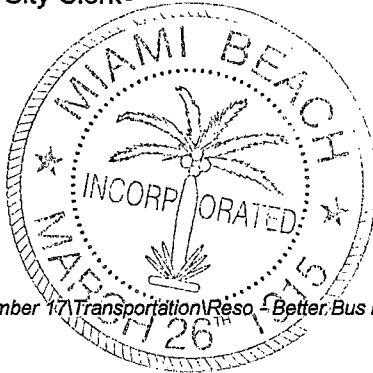


Dan Gelber, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk **SEP 22 2021**



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**APPROVED AS TO
FORM & LANGUAGE
& FOR EXECUTION**


City Attorney

9-23-21
Date