

MIAMI BEACH

Presentations & Awards/Commission Meeting

City Hall, Commission Chambers, 3rd Floor, 1700 Convention Center Drive
February 24, 2016

Mayor Philip Levine
Commissioner John Elizabeth Alemán
Commissioner Ricky Arriola - Absent
Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez
Commissioner Michael Grieco
Commissioner Joy Malakoff
Commissioner Micky Steinberg

City Manager Jimmy L. Morales
City Attorney Raul J. Aguila
City Clerk Rafael E. Granado

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COMMISSION WORKSHOP ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Commission Workshop was called to order at 3:08:24 p.m.

Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager, explained that the focus of this Workshop is traffic issues, and what the City can do to deal with what appears to be a "new normal" traffic pattern, not only in the City, but also across Miami-Dade County. There has been a period of transition in years past, in which the philosophy of the City was traffic and transportation issues were County and FDOT issues; however, with this City Commission, the City has tried to take as much control as possible and working with the County and FDOT, from Transportation Master Plan to investing in alternative modes and public transportation; first with trolleys and now with streetcars. Traffic however, seems to have worsened and is affecting our lives, particularly with regional highways that have more traffic pattern. The Administration is asking for input to move forward.

Kathie G. Brooks, Assistant City Manager, introduced the presentation.

PowerPoint presentation shown. Click [here](#) to view.

Ms. Brooks discussed the following topics:

- Regional Highways and Causeways
- Populating Growth and Traffic Impacts

Aleksandar Stevanovic, Ph.D., P.E. spoke on the evaluation of the impact of I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway on 41st Street.

Kathie G. Brooks, Assistant City Manager, continued with the presentation on:

- Project Background
- Impacts of Saturation
- Traffic Management Working Group
- Traffic Monitoring and Management
- Digital Messaging
- Don't Block the Box Enforcement
- Blocking of Lane Enforcement
- Traffic Signal Timing
- Traffic Flow Mitigation Plan Procedure
- Traffic Flow
- Communications – Waze and Messaging MBTRAFFIC to 91011
- Turn Restriction Pilot Project
- 63rd Street Bridge Restrictions
- Employee Transportation
- Municipal Traffic Management Roundtable
- Longer Term Initiatives – Intelligent Transportation System
- Transportation Planning
- Light Rail/Modern Streetcar
- Short-Term Enhanced Bus
- Resources for Block The Box Enforcement
- Officers Controlling Traffic
- Deployment for Major Shutdowns
- Accident Prevention Initiatives
- Blocking Travel Lanes
- Alternatives During Special Event
- Employee Transportation
- Traffic Management Workshop

Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager, explained the shift hours to see if employee hours shifts are changed, traffic is improved.

Ms. Brooks stated that they are reaching out to neighboring communities, or roundtable, to discuss how to better coordinate traffic and develop communications structure.

Discussion held.

Police Chief Daniel Oates stated that his team is familiar with complaints and traffic issues. He introduced Lieutenant Chang and Sergeant Veski, who are traffic experts. A significant amount of traffic delays are the result of the blocking the box and challenges on 5th Street and 41st Street corridor. In the meantime, seven new rookie Police Officers, who just completed training, will be at these locations for the next two weeks to facilitate traffic flow. Sergeant Veski will bring five experienced motor officers assigned in March to work the

evening rush hours. He continued with the presentation.

Sergeant Michael Veski explained the recommended number of officers required per intersection. Three officers are needed to effectively manage one difficult intersection, to flush traffic and prevent blocking of the box in certain areas, such as in Alton Road from 16th Street to Michigan Avenue. He explained how Police Officers are located during different scenarios in order to help the traffic flow when lights are not working, especially in wide intersections.

Discussion continued.

Mayor Levine stated that residents complain that Police Officers are on the cell phones.

Chief Oates stated that at times the Police Officers may be receiving instructions on their cell phones from their superiors.

Discussion continued regarding challenges with highway closures.

Kathie G. Brooks, Assistant City Manager, continued with the presentation, and asked the City Commission to consider restricting construction that block major lanes of travel by allowing it only from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., Mondays through Thursdays – including City projects. Ms. Brooks cautioned that this may have the potential of generating noise in residential areas. Ms. Brooks asked the City Commission if they want to place additional restrictions on special events permits by limiting certain dates and hours. For yearly events, there is potential to consider reducing the number of events and allowing them with fewer limitations. Ms. Brooks inquired if there is direction for the Yacht Show and Satellite Fairs during Art Basel that do not have loading areas and block lanes of travel in order to load. During the recent Boat Show, there were limitations on the amount of parking onsite, with 100 parking spaces prepaid at \$60 per space, and everyone else was encouraged to come in with shuttle service or water taxis. Ms. Brooks asked if the City Commission would consider allowing shuttles and water taxis as alternatives to alleviate traffic. Ms. Brooks inquired if there is direction to develop aggressive requirements for an employee transportation plan. Does the City want to consider expanding current construction plan procedure to a construction transportation plan with alternatives?

City Manager Morales stated that the Boat Show has not been here this year, and the traffic pattern has been different.

Mayor Levine thanked everyone for the presentation and added that they need to do as much as they can to deal with the transportation challenges.

Commissioner Malakoff thanked everyone for working on the Stop Blocking the Box. She stated that Waze is sending drivers through different routes in residential neighborhoods, and this impacts neighboring residents in a negative manner. The City needs to have more City garages or P3 garages throughout the City in key locations, and as they get the Middle Beach trolley on board, people can park their cars at receptor garages, and take the trolley from there to get to work. She suggested looking to see if ferryboats could be implemented for Miami Beach since the waterways should be explored. **Jose Gonzalez to handle.**

Ms. Brooks stated that the Administration has a solicitation for private partnership to design and construct more City garages for the next two years. At the NCAC, discussion was held for looking at interchange on the Julia Tuttle to get people off their cars and connect to the trolleys in place. In terms of water taxis, they have been negotiating with a vendor, and a pilot program was in place during Art Basel. This item will be on the Agenda in March for a referral and then back to the full Commission for action.

City Manager Morales explained that the cost to ride the ferry makes it unattractive.

Discussion continued regarding a pilot program in place during Art Basel.

Mayor Levine asked if the City could consider sponsoring or subsidizing the ferries, perhaps Miami Beach can work with the City of Miami and the County.

Ms. Brooks answered that in the solicitation they requested the vendor to provide docking facilities, which means going through the State permit and building the facility, and this is one of the considerations to bring it back to the City Commission.

Vice-Mayor Alemán asked if they should consider establishing where the streetcars will be located in the future, since one of the factors of people not using public transportation is the slow pace of traffic. She is in favor of special events permits limits. She suggested expediting the Intelligent Traffic Control System.

Ms. Brooks stated that by summer they will have the procurement item out to bid for the Intelligent Traffic Control System.

City Manager Morales added that last year the City did not receive a Federal Tiger Grants, but there is new funding and applications have been reexamined, which is positive for the City of Miami Beach.

Vice-Mayor Alemán asked about ways or data system to understand the traffic pattern, and what remediation they can make to provide relief to residents as a priority. Intercept garages at the causeways with shuttles for workforce, she believes that the root causes of traffic are outside of the boundaries of Miami Beach; and they need to talk about adaptation strategy. She added that for schoolchildren, Miami-Dade County Public Schools will not provide school bus transport within two miles of the school; would it help to have a City solution for transporting children to school and keep parents off the road during the rush hour within the two-mile threshold. She also asked how many violations for Block the Box are there in the City. She encouraged the audience and residents not to "Block the Box."

Ms. Brooks stated that the number of violations for Block the Box has not been tracked for all intersections, but for 5th Street and Alton Road, there are close to 2,000 citations since October 2015.

Discussion continued.

Chief Oates explained that citations have been issued since December 2014. Miami Beach is a City of visitor, and as much as they try to educate the public, half the people at any point in time are visitors that are not educated on these regulations.

Vice-Mayor Alemán requested the data and citations given to visitors, but unfortunately, Chief Oates answered that the data is not available as it is not broken down by whether a citation recipient is a resident or not.

Commissioner Steinberg stated that communication is key, and added that it is important to place signage in strategic locations through the City. Block the Box signage can warn and educate people. She believes the City should have a base timing pattern that is optimized based on data; she explained that the lack of updated timing of lights is why it makes sense to have a holistic study of signalized corridors to optimize timing through scientific modeling. With active traffic management, the base model should be optimized to current volumes.

Ms. Brooks stated that the ideal would be to get to having those optimized patterns to regular flow, and a separate one for special events, even a special unique for unique special events, but they are standardized and used or adjusted when there is a major shutdown on a road.

Jose Gonzalez, Transportation Director, explained that corridors are State corridors, and they are collaborating with them. FDOT has set aside funding for signal optimization for this fiscal year, and the City wants to ensure that the funds are captured to improve problematic corridors.

Commissioner Steinberg also stated that complaints received from North Beach residents is that County buses are not very reliable, and she asked what they can do, in working with the County, to make sure that alternative transportation modes are reliable so they become viable. The City and the County need to work together to make the changes.

Ms. Brooks added that this is the priority of the new Director in Transportation is working on. **Jose Gonzalez to reach out to the County.**

Discussion continued.

City Manager Morales added that the County has designated a municipal traffic liaison and that is a positive step forward on their end.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez thinks that the recalibration of the lights is generating increase traffic. She suggested having the light timing reset to what they were before.

Ms. Brooks explained that only when they have examined the pattern with data, will they make permanent changes. In answering Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez, she explained that the consultant has been working with the County since 2013 for the special events, but those are not permanent changes.

Jose Gonzalez, Transportation Director, explained that the change is from one established pattern to another, so it is not one direction or intersection is tweaked without coordination; those modifications are coordinator along the corridors, so it is not a change that is done in a vacuum.

Discussion continued.

Ms. Brooks added that they have not come up with a new patterns and this is something they are beginning to work with.

Discussion held regarding peak periods and increase volumes of up to 25% in the last year.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez encouraged everyone to reconsider going back to the old timing and removing the bump-outs across the City, as this causes traffic back up.

Commissioner Grieco thanked City staff for the presentation. He encouraged residents to keep sending him e-mails regarding traffic problems. The issue is that people have trouble getting around Miami Beach, not just in and out of Miami Beach. He offered a solution to people blocking the intersections, and that is to put Police Officers at every intersection every day from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on 41st and 5th Streets. He understands that this will increase the budget, but he believes it is necessary. He highlighted the trouble the City has had to deal with unpermitted construction, which usually obstruct lanes and worsen traffic. A major factor that has contributed to today's traffic troubles is the fact that the Baylink transit was voted down 10-12 years ago. Back then, the former Administration did not see the value of public transportation, and now the residents of Miami Beach must face traffic congestion without a viable public transportation alternative. The solution to

the City's traffic problems is public transportation.

Mayor Levine agreed with his colleague and stated that this Administration needs to plan for the future.

Commissioner Malakoff stated that the City needs intercept garages that connect to the other modes of transportation allowing people to get to their homes and places of work. She additionally recommended painting the road intersections with white perpendicular lines to highlight clearly the intersection "box" that must not be blocked.

Discussion held.

Vice-Mayor Alemán emphasized that the City needs to control the traffic that flows into the City. The City Commission should consider adding a toll (congestion pricing) and see if economics will be the push to change behavior. She encouraged residents to use public transportation, but she also addressed the fact that the City needs reliable transportation, and separate lanes, so that busses and light rail cars can flow despite traffic.

Commissioner Steinberg cautioned about placing more Police Officers at intersections, because from her understanding it is not as effective as properly timed traffic signals.

Sergeant Veski explained the reason for delays when Police Officers are present at traffic intersections. He used an example of when he was on 63rd Street and Indian Creek Drive to help traffic move southbound.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez is in support of the intermodal facility, but she is concerned for the costs of funding Bay Link at approximately \$600 million. She agreed with the idea of charging tolls into the City. She asked whether the City could purchase the right of way from the County on some of County Roads. The City needs to experiment with new solutions, and stop developments until traffic is under control.

Mayor Levine asked for information on how many new construction projects have been approved in the City during the last two and a half years, and how the population has increased during that time. **Tom Mooney and Jose Gonzalez-to handle.**

Commissioner Grieco asked to include how many buildings have been built in the last five years before that. **Tom Mooney and Jose Gonzalez-to handle.**

Vice-Mayor Alemán also asked to provide information on how the density has changed in the last two and a half years. **Tom Mooney and Jose Gonzalez-to handle.**

Mayor Levine addressed the audience, and opened the public hearing. He asked speakers to stay on the topic of traffic.

Former City Commissioner Jerry Libbin asked the City Commission to look into reversible lanes, particularly at Indian Creek Drive and Abbott Avenue going southbound. He also suggested a second bridge to go over the causeways (double-decker), and perhaps the City could raise funds with FDOT for that project. He is not in favor of raising the price of events, because it will not be fair to the residents who live in Miami Beach.

Jürgen Brendel stated that the focus is managing traffic in Miami Beach, but he would like the City Commission to focus on preventing vehicles from coming into the City, by adding shuttles. He agreed with Mr. Libbin's suggestion to add a second bridge over the causeways, but stated he would prefer a tunnel.

Debbie Gold stated that residents are frustrated with traffic, and it is making living in the City very unpleasant. She appreciates the efforts the City Commission is taking to tackle the problem, but she believes they lack short-term solutions.

Ray Breslin suggested bringing the A Bus from Omni to the City and back. He explained how the South Beach Local did not have a stop at Collins Park, and it eventually became one of the most popular stops. These projects take persistence.

Mayor Levine reminded everyone that the Venetian Causeway will be reopening on February 29, 2016.

Tanya Bach, Bayshore Homeowners Association member, requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation. She suggested having more Police enforcement. She has lived in Miami Beach for 12 years, and has never experienced traffic as bad as it is now. She liked the London example proposed by Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez (congestion pricing to enter the City). She would also like a bicycle lane on the Julia Tuttle Causeway.

Allison Stone requested that the 41st Street and Collins Avenue left hand turns be made illegal, as they stop traffic. Police presence does help the traffic situation. She commended the City for having text updates regarding traffic, but would like to make sure they also send notifications when the issues have been cleared up.

Mayor Levine suggested moving the I-95 expressway entrance farther north, so that people coming from Miami Beach have access to it without impediment by the HOV lanes.

Ms. Brooks stated that they will look into it. **Jose Gonzalez to handle.**

Commissioner Grieco added that the exit to Biscayne Boulevard from I-195 is a failed intersection, and it creates a great deal of congestion, but it is out of the City's jurisdiction.

Sam Reich stated that it is unacceptable to refer to the current state of traffic as the "new normal." He has heard a great deal of excuses, and no one should sit for half an hour in traffic. He has never seen traffic as bad as in Miami Beach. He also added that something needs to be done with the speeding in the City. Too many cars are speeding down residential roads.

Mayor Levine asked whether traffic apps such as Waze are affecting traffic.

Ms. Brooks explained that they can bring suggestions forward, but these apps do negatively affect traffic.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked to remove the bump outs; and asked for better traffic light calibration.

Brian Sandhouse is affected by traffic and thanked Commissioner Grieco for his efforts. He thinks a solution could be to restrict right turns from Alton Road onto Chase Avenue between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., to prevent traffic seeking alternate routes onto I-95. He also suggested removing the triangle on 41st Street and Collins, and making a second turn lane.

Ms. Brooks stated that they can try this out, and work with Police.

Dr. Ari Ciment, Pulmonary Clinical Doctor at Mount Sinai, stated that he had a 30-minute traffic delay going to Mount Sinai for an emergency call. He arrived at the hospital only because he got out of his car and walked the rest of the way. He stated that the Police have been very helpful in directing traffic, but added that something needs to be done regarding Prairie Avenue.

Marsha Gilbert spoke. She is against the traffic light by the 69th Street North Beach Publix. The light is confusing, and drivers do not know whether to stop or start when they get to it.

City Manager Morales stated that this is being addressed with FDOT. He added that they are looking into the lane changes on 71st Street, because the delays started once FDOT made the changes.

Gayle Frank agreed that the North Beach Publix street crossing is very dangerous.

Vice-Mayor Alemán asked if they can pilot something with the A bus.

City Manager Morales will follow up on this.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked if they could explore the idea of a toll, or purchase the right of way from the County.

Ms. Brooks will bring an item for NCAC to discuss further.

Workshop adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Handouts or Reference Materials:

1. Email from Christina Steinman manager@latourcondo.com dated February 19, 2016 RE: Commission Workshop on Transportation: La Tour Condominium.
2. PowerPoint presentation.
3. Ad No. 1128 published in The Miami Herald.