



## COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: February 25, 2009

SUBJECT: **REFERRAL TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – FOR A DISCUSSION ON THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH DRAFT TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM.**

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

Refer the item.

### BACKGROUND

The City began the Traffic Calming Program in an effort to create an open process, self directed by the City to be able to address requests more timely. In the past, residents consistently made requests for traffic calming during public involvement meetings. These requests were received primarily during the development of Basis of Design Reports (BODR) for various capital improvement projects. The majority of these concerns were related to cut-through traffic and/or speeding on the local neighborhood streets, as opposed to traffic moving through collector and arterial roadways.

In response to these requests and in order to preserve the safety and livability of our community, the City of Miami Beach pursued the development of a Traffic Calming Program tailored to address traffic concerns related to the traffic volume and speeding in local and residential streets.

The City retained the services of Kittelson and Associates to develop a Traffic Calming Manual. The Traffic Calming Manual is intended to create a methodology to address traffic calming requests in a consistent and systematic way and serve as the City's model instead of the current County model. Miami-Dade County currently has the authority and responsibility for all traffic engineering County-wide. All requests for traffic calming must be approved by the County, and the County, at its discretion, may or may not fund such projects.

It has been the City's intent to enter into an Intergovernmental Agency Agreement (IAA) with the County for traffic calming. The intent of the IAA would be to make the City responsible for the review and approval of all future installations and maintenance of these devices, and allow the City to perform the work rather than the County. It is unclear at this time if the County will allow the City to have full approval authority, and this should be taken into consideration when determining how to proceed with the City's Traffic Calming Program.

It is important to note that since the beginning of the Traffic Calming Program development, the City has received nine (9) resident requests for traffic calming, therefore suggesting an increased awareness by residents of potential speeding through local streets. The pending approval of the IAA has caused a delay in the overall implementation of this program and for the City's ability to address the increasing number of requests received from residents for traffic calming in their neighborhoods.

Agenda Item CYE

Date 2-25-09

## **TRAFFIC CALMING PILOT STUDY**

As part of the Traffic Calming Program, the City, in coordination with the County, initiated a traffic calming pilot study to test the functionality of speed cushions in reducing speed. Research of other cities with successful traffic calming programs has shown that pilot projects were generally conducted before starting full implementation of citywide traffic calming measures. The data gathered during the pilot study is significant as it forms the basis of the types of traffic conditions that will be eligible for traffic calming measures under this program. The pilot program also allows the City to better understand what is required in the administration of this service and activity.

The first phase of the pilot study conducted by Kittelson and Associates included a traffic analysis of the following three (3) streets:

- 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Chase Avenue to Pine Tree Drive
- Prairie Avenue, W 28<sup>th</sup> Street to W 41<sup>st</sup> Street
- North Bay Road, Michigan Avenue to W 29<sup>th</sup> Street

These locations were chosen since these sites represent potential of traffic conditions where traffic calming may be warranted and also as a result of expressed concern from residents and City staff pertaining to perceived speeds. The pilot locations will serve as data gathering points to confirm the effectiveness of the installed devices and their capacity to calm traffic. The following parameters were used to select these locations:

- Neighborhood streets that have had traffic intrusion problems
- Neighborhood streets that residents have consistently complained about speeding or cut-through traffic
- Neighborhood streets that are included in the Capital Improvement Program
- Neighborhood streets that are longer than three (3) blocks

The second phase of the pilot study consisted of the installation of temporary speed cushions at various locations along the warranted streets. In order to expedite the installation of the speed cushions for the traffic calming pilot projects, the City received County approval to install the traffic calming devices without an IAA. The Miami Beach Police and Fire Departments have tested the speed cushions installed on North Bay Road and Prairie Avenue and determined that their ability to respond to emergencies is not impacted.

As part of the installation phase, a post-installation traffic engineering analysis will then be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the speed cushions at reducing traffic speeds. The speed cushions are designed to be removable in the event that the pilot study proves them to be ineffective. City staff will conduct the post-installation traffic analysis after the speed cushions have been installed for three (3) months, which will be in May 2009. The Traffic Calming Manual will be revised according to the results of the post-installation traffic analysis.

## **FUNDING STATUS**

Resolution # 2005-25867 (adopted April 20,2005) appropriated \$110,000 in Concurrency Mitigation Funds for the purchase of two (2) speed and volume counters; the development of traffic calming plans and manual for Miami Beach, and the purchase of materials to implement solutions recommended for the pilot areas (see Table 1). The City purchased the counters and awarded a contract in the amount of \$25,000 to Kittelson and Associates for the development of the Traffic Calming Manual and to assist the City on the implementation of the pilot program. The City has also purchased speed cushions and signs for the locations of the pilot study, and has hired a contractor for installation of the devices. In addition, \$30,000 in People's Transportation Plan funds were appropriated in FY 2008-09 for the traffic calming program. The total amount remaining after the implementation of the study and devices is approximately \$54,012.

**Table 1. Funding for Traffic Calming Program**

<b>Traffic Calming Program</b>	<b>Amount Appropriated</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Speed and volume counters	\$5,000	\$0
Development of traffic calming plans/manual	\$25,000	\$1,012
Traffic Calming devices	\$110,000	\$53,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>	<b>\$54,012</b>

### **CURRENT STATUS**

At the present time, the City needs to decide how to proceed with Traffic calming. Completion of the Traffic Calming Manual will be linked to the direction and role that the City Commission would like the City to assume for this activity.

The City's initial approach was to be in the role of directing the traffic calming process and performing all necessary review, approval and implementation for City traffic calming projects. This role would necessitate that the City devote staff time and capital resources to the program. The program would be similar in many respects to the one which is currently used by the County, but would provide a more expeditious review and a better chance of implementation of traffic calming. Administering a traffic calming program would also necessitate that the City accept the responsibility to make decisions on traffic calming pursuant to the Manual parameters and the engineering data that is collected. The program would have parameters similar in nature to the review and warrant standards that are applied to other traffic devices, for example, speed and traffic volume data.

The change in economic conditions may be sufficient to make the original approach to traffic calming unfeasible and City Commission direction on this point is needed. Further, it is uncertain if the County will relinquish its authority to enable this approach to be pursued.

The City Commission may want to explore other options for addressing traffic calming in light of the above.

Other options to explore are to either allow the County to continue the management of traffic calming for the City, or to establish a system where the City assumes a more limited advisory role, and then seeks final approval from the County.

If the direction is to allow the County program to continue as it has, the City could effectively abandon the traffic calming program and no further direction would be required. If the City Commission would like to pursue a hybrid of the two previous options, a more limited role for the City can be defined within available resources. In a hybrid model the City would be more of a resource for information to our residents to help organize traffic calming requests that would be presented to the County for final review and approval. This limited role would only be advisory and might take an advocacy role if a request meets the warrants as established in the County traffic calming system. As with continuing to use the current County system, there would be no real need to have a Traffic Manual for the City in this hybrid model.

The options that differ from the original City approach to run a local traffic calming program may result in a delayed traffic calming process and may reduce the number of traffic calming requests approved. The City approach to traffic calming we believe would be less rigid than the County system. These consequences may be inevitable facing the budget issues that must be addressed in this and future years.

City Commission direction on the desired role of the City and resources to be provided will enable the Administration to determine how to proceed with the program and what to communicate to our residents inquiring about traffic calming in their neighborhoods.

**CONCLUSION**

It is requested that this issue be added to the next available Neighborhoods/Community Affairs Committee meeting for discussion and to provide necessary direction.

JMG/RCM/FV/XF/CB

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