



# MIAMI BEACH

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LETTER TO COMMISSION

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

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: May 12, 2009

SUBJECT: REPORT ON PLANNING EFFORTS FOR MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND 2009  
(THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2009 – MONDAY, MAY 25, 2009)

Similar to the City's successful planning efforts for the past five Memorial Day Weekends, the City has begun a comprehensive and coordinated planning effort to prepare for the upcoming Memorial Day 2009 Holiday Weekend (Thursday, May 21, 2009 – Monday, May 25, 2009). Irrespective of any events and based upon early occupancy reports, it is anticipated that this year's holiday weekend will attract at least as many people as previous Memorial Day weekends, causing the City's resources to be strained.

### **Background**

As part of the City of Miami Beach's Major Events Plan (MEP), in 2003, the City began submitting a request for In-Kind Services assistance to Miami-Dade County to provide enhanced public safety resources, beach maintenance and the participation of members of the County's Goodwill Ambassador Team, to assist the City of Miami Beach throughout the Memorial Day holiday weekend. In 2005, the County included In-Kind support for Memorial Day weekend in their annual budget, which eliminates the need for a separate request. Annual in-kind support is based on actual costs from the previous year. As in the past years, the City's Police Department will be cancelling off-duty assignments and deploying public safety staff on an alpha/bravo shift assignment. This will be supplemented by mutual aide from Miami-Dade County and additional assistance from Florida Highway Patrol, City of Miami, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Miami-Dade Corrections Department, Coral Gables, and Fort Lauderdale.

The City has advised event promoters that its resources will be fully extended during the Memorial Day weekend (a major holiday weekend) and unavailable to support any events on public property. Similar to the Super Bowl, the City will, however, continue to work with those organizations who desire to host events on their private property and require approvals for change of use. At present, the Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater scheduled to have Mike Epps on Friday, May 22, 2009 at 7:00PM. The Miami Beach Convention Center is hosting Johnson and Wales Graduation on Sunday, May 24, 2009 from 12:00 pm (noon) – 3:00 pm.

### **Transportation Plan**

Closure of Ocean Drive is not contemplated this year, but is planned for in the event crowd control issues arise. Nonetheless, the Miami Beach Police Department will implement a transportation plan between Ocean Drive, Collins and Washington avenues from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street from 7:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. daily, beginning Friday, May 22 through Monday morning, May 25. The plan will be similar to prior years, with the exception of allowing east/west vehicular traffic on some cross streets between Ocean and Washington. This plan

includes the closure of some 100 and 200 blocks between 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street throughout the weekend. Washington Avenue and Collins Avenue will remain open with two-way traffic. If population expectations surpass or do not materialize, the transportation plan will be altered accordingly to ensure public safety.

The City will once again implement a plan similar to last year to address pedestrian overflow along Collins Avenue, especially on certain blocks where pedestrian flow often exceeds sidewalk capacity. The plan was first implemented in 2007 with much success. Sidewalks along Collins Avenue will be expanded into the parking lane using French barricades to accommodate the large pedestrian crowds from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Espanola Way. French barricades will also be utilized along the curb on the east side parking lanes of the 600, 1200 and 1400 blocks of Washington Avenue to increase pedestrian capacity on the sidewalks and prevent overflow into the street. Staff continues to research similar options for specific locations on Ocean Drive, and will implement those options if necessary.

The Miami-Dade Transit Agency will operate the Local shuttle bus service and offer free transportation throughout the weekend.

### **Community Outreach**

The City has also been working with the Miami-Dade County Office of Community Relations to expand our Goodwill Ambassador Program. As you know, the City's Goodwill Ambassadors provide assistance, helping our visitors remain informed on pertinent laws and dispel any confusion our guests may have. The City will provide "comp" time to employees that volunteer Ambassadors.

In addition to an expanded Goodwill Ambassador program, we are looking to expand our information efforts before and during this weekend. These efforts include signage, flyers, and radio outreach providing information in current City, State and Federal codes. Consistent with our other efforts to provide and facilitate information to our visitors and residents during the MEP, the City will activate an "Answer Center" during the weekend, and weekday after hours. Answer Center staff will be able to assist with directing questions and will also forward any police complaints to the on-duty Internal Affairs sergeant for their review and handling. We will be working with our Communications Staff to promote (via signage, brochures, etc.) the availability of the Answer Center number to our visitors and residents, including the issues that the Answer Center can assist with.

Given the current economy, hotel occupancy booking trends are very short term. That being said, we have no reason to think hotel occupancy in the region's hotels will be different than in previous years. The City is continuing to conduct a broad and concerted outreach effort throughout the community, as delineated above. This outreach has been coordinated with the assistance of the Nightlife Advisory Task Force, the Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association, GMCVB, South Beach Restaurant and Hotel Association, and Miami-Dade County.

### **Other Initiatives**

In accordance with the MEP, several other initiatives continue and are ongoing, including:

- Internal staff meetings have been conducted and expanded to include County beach maintenance, public safety, code compliance and transportation system staff and community stakeholders.
- Department staffing plans, including enhanced levels of service and fiscal impact, are being developed; enhanced staffing includes: Parking, Parks, Code Compliance, Public Works/Sanitation, Police, Fire, and TCD/Special Events.

- Goodwill Ambassadors recruitment is ongoing, and training sessions are forthcoming.
- Monitoring Hotel Occupancy and collaborating with the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) and the Hotel Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches.
- Ongoing outreach, communications and meetings with hotels, nightclubs, entertainment establishments and merchants.
- Monitoring and assisting with promoter licenses.
- Pre-planned coordination with City, County and State law enforcement agencies to develop an effective resource deployment allocation, including provision of off-duty police for area hotels has been ongoing.
- Transportation plan(s) being developed and implemented based upon population expectations, including provisions for shuttle transportation in the Entertainment District to alleviate congestion.
- The Miami Beach Community Relations Board (CRB), including the Miami-Dade County CRB representatives, have been actively participating with City Staff.
- Developing and implementing the community outreach and pre-publicity campaign with media partners.

While we cannot assure any major impact weekend will go without incident, the City is effectively planning and preparing its resources to assure a safe, clean, and successful weekend, and minimize to the extent possible any impacts to our residents from increased traffic and visitor volume.

C: Management Team

JMG/HMF/MAS

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