



MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: September 11, 2013

SUBJECT: **REFERRAL TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PERMANENT CLOSURE OF THE 400 BLOCK OF ESPAÑOLA WAY BETWEEN WASHINGTON AVENUE AND DREXEL AVENUE.**

BACKGROUND

Currently, the 400 Block of Española Way (between Washington Avenue and Drexel Avenue) is closed from 6:00 PM to 5:00 AM every day and functions as a pedestrian mall with numerous sidewalk cafes, retail venues, and restaurants. When open to traffic, the 400 Block operates as a one-way street in the westbound direction only.

In May 2012, City officials attended an Española Way merchants meeting with representatives of property owners and business owners. At the meeting, Española Way merchants requested the extension of the street closure duration from 11:00 AM to 6:00 AM in order to enhance the commercial viability of the corridor and improve pedestrian safety; thus, this one block of portion Española Way would be closed to traffic for nineteen hours each day. During this meeting, the City was informed that most deliveries occur from Drexel Avenue and Washington Avenue because trucks cannot operate safely on Española Way. Based on the input from the merchants, the City committed to conducting a traffic study in order to evaluate the impact of the full closure of the 400 block of Española Way on the community and the adjacent roadway network.

In February 2013, City staff met with representatives and property owners of the 400 Block of Española Way to discuss the requirements for the street closure. During this meeting, the representatives and property owners were advised of the process to be followed pursuant to the County's Traffic Flow Modifications/Street Closure procedure. Essentially, the process consists of the following six (6) steps:

1. A traffic study must be conducted to identify the impacts (if any) of the street closure on the adjacent properties and roadway network.
2. Ballots must be completed by property owners affected by the proposed closure and concurrence must be obtained from two-thirds (2/3) of all respondents.
3. City review and approval, including Fire, Police and Public Works Departments.
4. A public meeting to inform property owners regarding the proposed closure.
5. A City Commission Resolution approving the street closure (Resolution may override

Agenda Item C4B
Date 9-11-13

ballot results).

6. Approval from the Miami-Dade County Public Works and Waste Management Department

ANALYSIS

In May 2013, the City initiated the balloting process. Ballots were mailed to 53 properties within the area bounded by 14th Street on the south, 15th Street on the north, Washington Avenue on the east and Pennsylvania Avenue on the west. Over two-thirds (2/3) of the respondents voted in favor of the street closure, thus meeting one of the required criteria for closure.

The City has engaged a traffic engineering firm to conduct the required traffic study. At this time, the traffic consultant is evaluating the data collected to identify any impacts and determine if the closure is feasible. In the coming weeks, staff will be meeting internally with the City's Fire and Police Departments to obtain input on the closure and present optional treatments for closure. Subsequently, the City will host a public meeting with property owners and tenants/residents of the 400 Block of Española Way to present its findings and recommendations regarding the closure.

As stated above, as part of the closure process, Miami-Dade County Public Works and Waste Management Department, the entity with jurisdiction over traffic flow modifications and street closures throughout the County, must review and approve the traffic study, ballot results, and recommended method of closure if the closure is found to be feasible.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and the City Commission refer the matter to the Neighborhood/Community Affairs Committee for input and further direction.


KGB/E/C/JRG/JFD

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