

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # **492-2016**

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: November 16, 2016

SUBJECT: **TEMPORARY WATER TAXI SERVICE IN CONNECTION WITH VENETIAN CAUSEWAY EAST BASCULE BRIDGE CLOSURE**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to report on the City's findings and recommendations with regards to providing temporary water taxi service during the 45-day closure of the Venetian Causeway east bascule bridge repair project being undertaken by Miami-Dade County.

Starting on Monday, November 14, 2016, Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) temporarily closed the East Bascule Bridge on the Venetian Causeway in order to complete repairs on the bridge. The East Bascule Bridge is expected to remain closed to vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic until approximately December 29, 2016, barring any unforeseen circumstances. During the bridge closure, County Bus Route A (101) service will only operate between Omni terminal and Rivo Alto Drive East for approximately 8 hours a day/7 days a week. DTPW has committed to opening the Venetian Causeway eastern bridge temporarily to all traffic during Art Basel 2016.

In connection with the 45-day closure of the east Venetian Causeway bridge, City staff evaluated the feasibility of providing a temporary water taxi service between the affected Venetian Islands west of the eastern bridge and Purdy Avenue dock. A potential location for construction of a temporary water taxi dock on the north side of the Venetian Causeway and west of the eastern bridge was identified in coordination with Water Taxi Miami. Due to "rough waters" experienced at this location, the cost of constructing a temporary semi-fixed dock is estimated to be approximately \$80,000. The cost for Water Taxi Miami to operate the water taxi service from the potential dock location to Purdy Avenue dock would be approximately \$1,500/day using a 38-passenger vessel operating 12 hours per day. Therefore, the total cost of building a temporary dock and providing water taxi service for a 45-day period was estimated to be approximately \$150,000.

At its November 9, 2016 meeting, during a discussion on the Venetian Causeway bridge closure, the City Commission directed staff to explore the possibility of using an existing private (or public) dock located west of the eastern Venetian Causeway bridge, thus avoiding the need to construct a temporary dock. Pursuant to the direction from the City Commission, on November 10, 2016, Transportation Department staff met with Water Taxi Miami representatives and conducted various site visits (both from the water and from land) of existing private and public docks that could potentially be used for temporary water taxi service. Based on this assessment, it was determined that private docks would not be feasible due to either

poor condition of the dock, on-going construction activities within the private property, or accessibility issues. Many private docks were also found to be occupied by vessels.

While Sea Isle Marina (the public marina located in the City of Miami just north of Venetian Causeway) could be considered a viable docking location for water taxi service to Purdy Avenue dock, given the time it would take to travel to the Sea Isle Marina, the limited County bus service operating along the Venetian Causeway, and the need for multiple transfers between different modes of transportation in order for passengers to complete their respective trips to/from the City, staff believes that Miami Beach residents living in the affected Venetian Islands and wishing to commute to the City would likely not use the water taxi service and very little, if any, mobility benefits would result from providing the temporary service.

It is important to note that the City is working closely with Water Taxi Miami and anticipates launching the 1-year water taxi pilot service connecting Bayfront Park, Sea Isle Marina, Purdy Avenue Dock, and the Miami Beach Marina by end of this year.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.


JLM/KGB/JRG/MM