RESOLUTION NO. 2003-25317

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE CONTINUATION OF THE BAY LINK TRANSIT PROJECT INTO THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING (FEIS/PE) PHASE OF STUDY; DESIGNATING THE STREETCAR MODE AS THE OPTIMAL TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY; AND DESIGNATING A BI-DIRECTIONAL LOOP ROUTE UTILIZING THE WASHINGTON AVENUE AND ALTON ROAD CORRIDORS AS THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA), AS DESCRIBED FULLY IN THE FINAL HDR REPORT.

WHEREAS, the proposed Bay Link Transportation Corridor Project (the Project) will provide an improved transit link between downtown Miami and the City of Miami Beach; and

WHEREAS, the Project will also provide a rapid transit local circulator that will replace or minimize the need for City Electrowave service and the Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) buses presently operating in South Beach; and

WHEREAS, the City's independent transit consultant, HDR Engineering, Inc., final report dated September 8, 2003, that is incorporated hereto by reference, has been prepared to assist decision makers in deliberations regarding the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the findings and recommendations of the City's independent transit consultant, HDR Engineering, Inc. are to:

- Utilize a streetcar transit technology;
- Designate a route that provides a bi-directional loop utilizing the Washington Avenue and Alton Road corridors, as described fully in the HDR final report; and

WHEREAS, the Miami Beach Planning Board voted to support the transit improvement project on September 24, 2002 and subsequently endorsed the findings on transit technology by the City's transit consultant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, that the City of Miami Beach supports proceeding with the FEIS/PE phase of the Bay Link transit project with the following conditions to be addressed in the FEIS/PE phase:

- Another Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process shall be initiated to continue analyzing an alignment to Middle Beach and North Beach, utilizing the Collins Avenue corridor, as recommended by the Miami Beach Planning Board.

- A local circulator bus route connecting the rail stations with the adjacent neighborhoods should be considered, particularly to areas of Middle and North Beach.

- Construction of an intermodal transit facility that would also accommodate the local circulator route, above mentioned.

- Replacement and enhancement of any displaced parking in Miami Beach.

- Replacement and enhancement of landscaping in project corridor to include shade tree canopy above the wire.

- Operating funds for the system are from the Transit Tax or other County provided resources, not Miami Beach sources.

- During any construction, a public outreach and awareness effort managed by Miami Beach is to be funded from Transit Tax and other non-Miami Beach fund sources.

- Miami Beach maintains control over the design of stations and the appearance of vehicles used in the system.

- Funds are provided to Miami Beach for business impact mitigation.

- Complete an origin and destination study to guide future routing to serve the entirety of Miami Beach.

- Develop a definitive plan for mainland expansion that clearly delineates future routes beyond downtown Miami.

- Diversion of MDT bus traffic over causeways north of the MacArthur; and a plan for bus traffic that does not result in a bus depot being created in Miami Beach, to the extent feasible.

- Creation of a Citizen's Oversight Board once the full funding grant agreement is approved.

- DEIS operating parameters responsive to Miami Beach peak traffic needs.

- The City requests consideration by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of an independent transit consultant to assist the City with the completion of the next phase of the study, to be selected by the City and paid by the MPO.

- The core team of Parsons Brinkerhoff shall be expanded to add an urban planning and community development expertise.

- During the FEIS, the City of Miami Beach will have a Commission-appointed technical advisory committee to review and monitor the study and to provide detailed design feedback as needed.

- The County collected contribution for Art in Public Places on the Miami Beach component is to be specifically earmarked for use in the City of Miami Beach, or provided to the City's Art in Public Places fund.

- Conditions identified in (sections 4.2, Locally Preferred Alternative Conditions and 4.3, Action Plan for Miami Beach) of the Evaluation of Rapid Transit Options – Final Report for Phase 1, September 8, 2003 and included by reference.

- Project will include the use of Geographic Positioning System or other means to provide real time vehicle arrival information at station stops.

- A vibration study is to be included in the FEIS analysis for historic buildings.

- Based on the commitment received from Miami-Dade County, expeditiously implement bus improvements to the existing bus services provided for the Middle and North Beach areas.

And be further resolved that the streetcar technology and the route utilizing the Alton Road and Washington Avenue corridors as described in the final report by HDR dated September 8, 2003, and with route modifications as approved by the Mayor and City Commission at the September 8, 2003 meeting and illustrated on the attached map, is hereby approved as the Locally Preferred Alternative and to be submitted to the Metropolitan Planning Organization for continued action.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 8th **day of** September**, 2003.**

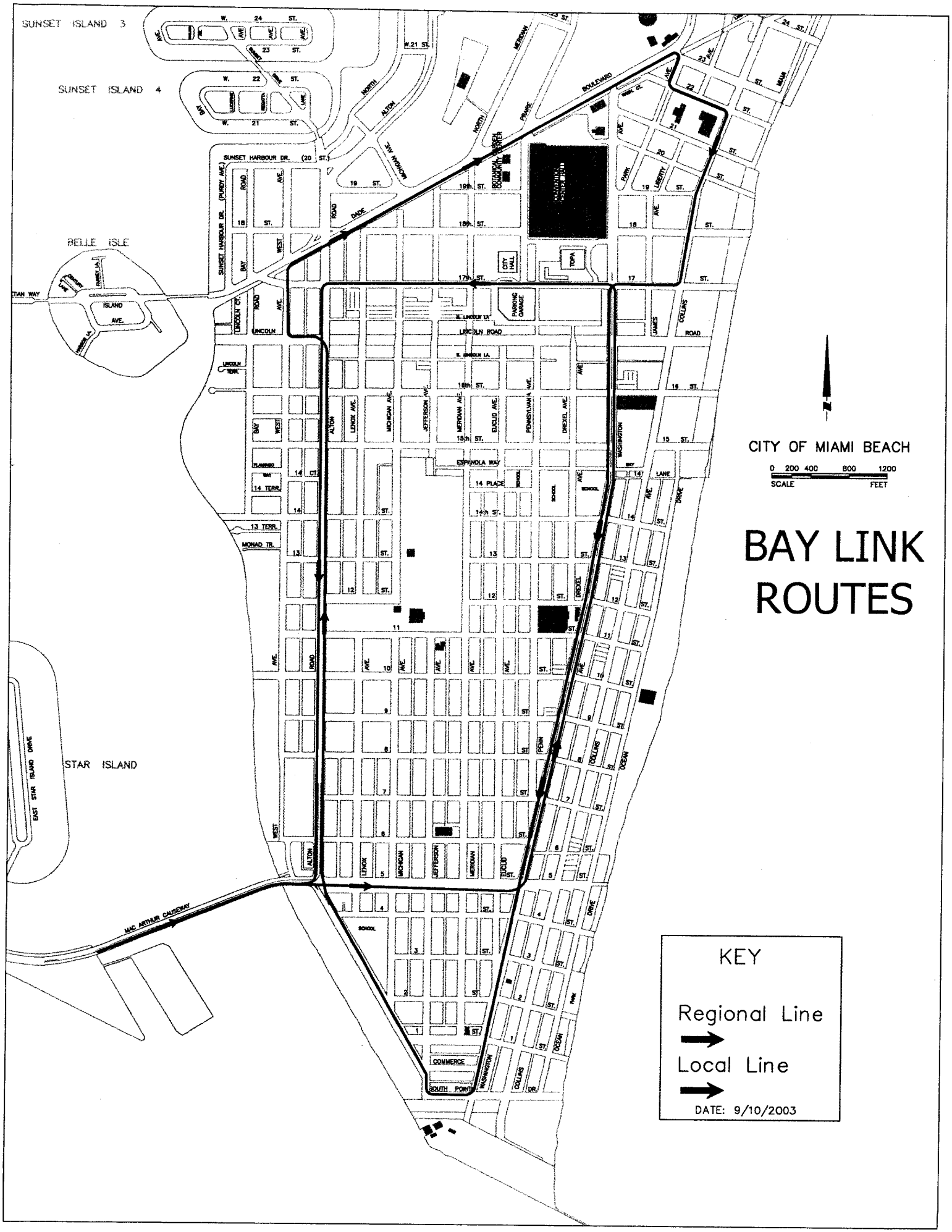
MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM & LANGUAGE & FOR EXECUTION

City Attorney 9/12/03 Date



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MAC ARTHUR CAUSEWAY
SUNSET HARBOUR DR. (20 ST.)
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CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
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SCALE FEET
BAY LINK ROUTES
KEY
Regional Line
Local Line
DATE: 9/10/2003

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

CITY HALL 1700 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139
www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

Date: September 8, 2003

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Subject: **A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE CONTINUATION OF THE BAYLINK TRANSIT PROJECT INTO THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING (FEIS/PE) PHASE OF STUDY; AND DESIGNATING THE STREETCAR MODE AS THE OPTIMAL TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGNATING A BI-DIRECTIONAL LOOP ROUTE UTILIZING THE WASHINGTON AVENUE AND ALTON ROAD CORRIDORS AS THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA) AS DESCRIBED FULLY IN THE FINAL HDR REPORT.**

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the Resolution to indicate support to proceed with the FEIS/PE phase of the Baylink project and if so, to specify the optimal transit mode as streetcar technology and a route utilizing the Washington Avenue and Alton Road corridors as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the City, inclusive of conditions to be addressed in the FESI process.

The Miami Beach Planning Board has voted to support the transit improvement project on September 24, 2002 and subsequently endorsed the findings on transit technology by the City's transit consultant.

ANALYSIS

A brief summary of recent background on this issue is included as Attachment 1.

Subsequent to the Administration recommendation and the City Commission Special Meeting of March 10, 2003 on transit choices for the City, the City engaged the HDR consulting firm to assist the City Commission and the community with a decision regarding future transit modes for the City of Miami Beach. HDR was selected to provide a more detailed and independent analysis of transit options then has been previously provided to the City.

HDR was specifically and directly selected by the City Commission in a modified consultant selection process. The screening of all of the proposals to undertake the transit analysis was completed by the Administration to assure that only qualified consultants with valid proposals were forwarded to the Commission. Unlike typical selection processes, no

specific recommendation for a consultant selection was made by the Administration. After each consulting firm made a presentation directly to the Commission, the Commission selected HDR as the firm best able to assist the Commission and the Community with the transit analysis.

As important as the unique selection process was, the direction that was given to the consultant in completing the study was equally important. HDR was specifically requested to review transit options available to the City in detail and irrespective of previous work or recommendations, recommend to the Commission and the community the transit option that best suited the City of Miami Beach.

During the completion of the transit study, other than monitoring the work of the consultant, no direction as to the transit option preferred was given to HDR by the Administration.

As part of the HDR analysis the consultants undertook a substantial amount of research and conducted community meetings in which transit topics and transit options were discussed. As a result of the series of community meetings the community's understanding and knowledge of transit options improved dramatically. The work of HDR went well beyond the analysis offered as part of the original Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) both in reviewing and allowing community discussion and understanding of transit choices available to the City.

The consultant's final report is transmitted together with this memorandum for City Commission review. Highlights of the report include:

- A detailed analysis of various transit options available to the City with a recommendation of Streetcar transit technology as the most desirable mode for the City.
- A recommended route that utilizes the Alton and Washington corridors and also incorporates the cultural campus and some hotels on Collins. The recommended route also includes a circulator route wholly within the City of Miami Beach.
- A plan to expand the selected transit choice to serve the entire City.
- Review of the original DEIS report.
- Analysis of the federal transit funding process.
- Suggested conditions to be required before proceeding with a FEIS.

Subsequent to the City Commission review of the draft report by HDR at the City Commission Special Meeting of July 10, 2003 several questions that were specifically addressed by the City Commission were researched and added to the draft Transit Option report by HDR. Included in the final report, the Commissioners will find added information that specifically addresses:

- The ability of the consultants recommended transit mode (streetcar) to incorporate foliage/trees into the system development so as to beautify the corridor and also to obscure or mitigate impacts associated with electric catenary lines.
- The identification and illustration of venues in downtown Miami that would be served by a potential transit service and specifically the hotel rooms, which would be served in downtown Miami by a transit mode linking the City of Miami Beach.
- An expanded comparison between streetcar and electric trolley car and BRT.

As the Commission and community discussion has progressed on transit options, it has become apparent that there appears to be a consensus opinion of the community that some type of improved transit system is beneficial to the City of Miami Beach. Further, that a transit system will help the community in addressing its traffic and congestion issues and serve to be a long-term benefit for quality of life in the City of Miami Beach. While there is still no clear consensus on the most desirable mode of transit from the options available to the City of Miami Beach, several have developed as principle considerations or potential choices. The choices or options that seem to have captured a significant amount of attention and discussion include: bus rapid transit (BRT), electric trolley bus and the streetcar mode of transit.

In order to assist the community and the City Commission with what is a very important and long range decision; HDR was also tasked after the completion of their draft report on transit options to provide a more in-depth exploration and definitive comparison of the three previous modes. Also included and attached in the final HDR report is supplemental information that provides comparative information regarding the BRT, electric trolley bus and streetcar transit modes.

In the subsequent and detailed transit mode analysis, HDR recognizes that any one of the three leading options would serve to be an improvement in the City's transit system and would ultimately be a long term benefit to the City of Miami Beach. Each of the three transit options also could be incorporated into the City of Miami Beach's urban environment with some modifications or adjustments in order to provide successful transit systems. The differentiation between the options is in the level to which each of the options improves the transit service available to the City of Miami Beach. As each mode is analyzed there are some differences that are apparent between the three when contrasted in several key areas.

The most important areas identified in the HDR report for transit mode comparison and consideration is as follows:

1. <u>Suitability/practicality of the transit option</u>

   In this section, HDR contrasts the three modes as to:
   - Quality of ride
   - Capacity
   - Technology status

   The streetcar mode consistently rated higher than the other two modes in each subcategory. The streetcar had the best ride quality, the highest capacity and the best technology options. The trolleybus and BRT were less well ranked and offered similar disadvantages.

2. <u>Impacts</u>

   In this section, HDR contrasts the three modes as to:
   - Capture of choice riders
   - Real estate values

- Redevelopment effect
- Ability to integrate with a regional system

The streetcar mode ranked highest in each of the subcategories with the best ability to capture choice riders, and to have uniformly positive impacts on both real estate values and the potential for redevelopment. The Streetcar is able to be integrated into the regional transit system, as is BRT.

Overall, the streetcar mode of transit ranks highest in the comparative categories, with trolleybus and BRT ranked with fewer positive features. The disadvantages associated with the trolleybus and BRT modes vary by category, as such, depending upon the weight assigned to any one criteria, one may be higher ranked than the other. In none of the criteria did the trolleybus or BRT outperform the streetcar mode.

While not on the comparative table, two other factors have received the attention of the community and are also addressed in the full report. Impacts of construction on the community and the aesthetics associated with each option have been raised as concerns at some point in the discussion.

Aesthetically, each of the options may have some level of concern and as such, no clear choice emerges in this category. BRT is diesel technology, while the other two have electric overhead wires. The wider range of vehicle styles is available in the streetcar mode, which depending upon taste preferences may be a factor. The streetcar also comes with rail in the roadway, which is bothersome to some parties and not to others. All of the modes can be landscaped appropriately and public art can also equally enhance each option. As aesthetic appeal is variable by individual, the category is important only so long as there are no obvious and broadly accepted problems inherent with an option. In this category, none of the options has obvious and broadly accepted drawbacks.

Construction impacts also vary by mode. Each of the modes would require some level of construction at a minimum in building transit pick up and drop off stations. The nature of each mode makes this construction very similar for each mode. Both the streetcar and trolleybus modes would require the construction of similar overhead electric catenary systems. The overhead system construction in each case is not intrusive or prolonged. The largest construction impact for any of the modes is the need to construct an in ground rail system for the streetcar mode. While rail construction is necessary for the streetcar mode, unlike other rail options, the smaller streetcar technology allows a much shorter construction period with less impact. The best model for streetcar construction is reported by HDR as having been three weeks per block in the Portland streetcar construction. As a matter of comparison, most of the other City CIP projects will have a higher level of impact.

One item which is presented in the consultant's report, which was requested as background information, is system cost and long term maintenance. While clearly a concern for the overall process, as the study shows, this does need not to be a factor in the decision making process to be undertaken by the City Commission. Each of the three systems which seem to be of principal interest to the Commission and the community is of less initial capital cost than the MPO consultant recommended light rail transit mode option by a substantial margin. As such, the City of Miami Beach is clearly being fiscally prudent in selecting a cost effective transit option regardless of which of the three is selected. While there are advantages and disadvantages for life cycle replacement or long term

maintenance cost, the differences do not rise to the level that would cause long term costs for any of three options to be a negative factor in system operation, or a negative factor in the grant approval process. In light of the cost analysis, this issue is of less concern for the City than the transit mode discussion. It is suggested that the transit debate is more appropriately focused on the categories of suitability/practicality of the transit option and impacts as being more important to the Commission and community for the long term.

In the transit option discussion and decision on the September 8, 2003 Special Meeting, it is extremely important for the Commission to remain focused on the decision that is actually to be made. While the City Commission will be asked to select a Locally Preferred Alternative that will specify a transit mode and desired route, it is a decision that will enable the MPO and the City to proceed with the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and continue to develop and to study the alternative that has been selected. The decision of the Commission to proceed with an approved LPA and an FEIS moves the City toward a project, but the decision is still not final.

Clearly the level of analysis which has been done has been improved upon but there are questions which still appropriately need to be addressed in the next phase of the transit option development process. For that reason, a number of conditions are expected to be attached to any approval which might be forthcoming from the City of Miami Beach and forwarded to the MPO for consideration. Each of the conditions which are identified as important by the City of Miami Beach must be satisfied as part of the FEIS in order for a project to ultimately proceed to construction in the City of Miami Beach. Clearly the City of Miami Beach must be satisfied that at the conclusion of the FEIS, the transit alternative or product that is offered to the City of Miami Beach addresses the community's concern and fits the community's needs and interests. If this level of satisfaction is not reached, the City of Miami Beach clearly can stop the process and seek other options or choose not to proceed with any transit development project.

CONCLUSION:

As a result of the research done by both the MPO consultant and the City's own consultant, and in light of community discussion, the Administration concurs with the HDR recommendation of streetcar technology as the optimal transit choice as suggested for the preferred LPA for the City Commission's consideration. The task that the City set upon was to determine the best available transit system mode that would be compatible with the unique urban fabric of the City of Miami Beach and serve to be a long term benefit to the quality of life and the health and sustainability of our community. The HDR report does a thorough and professional job in analyzing transit options and the recommendation fulfills the expectation of identifying the most desirable or advantageous transit mode for the City of Miami Beach.

Given the magnitude and impact, both potentially positive and adverse to this issue and the level of debate and analysis conducted so far, it is clear that selecting any of the three (3) modes presented will not only greatly enhance the transit option for our community but will also leave a segment of our community not fully satisfied. While every effort has been made to perform an objective analysis, there are differences between the transit options that depending upon an individuals perspective, may lead to a varying degree of satisfaction. All of the options will work in Miami Beach to some degree with the optimum system being the streetcar mode.

As indicated earlier, each of the modes will enhance our community's transit system by varying degrees. The critical policy decision before you today is two fold: 1) Should the MPO study be moved along to the FEIS/Preliminary Engineering phase; and if so, 2) Which mode and route should be endorsed as the LPA. After a considerable amount of analysis and given the City's near term and long term transit needs, the streetcar mode is the optimal solution presented. The other alternatives presented (BRT, electric trolley) also enhance our transit option but to a lesser degree. Along the spectrum of transit improvements, the question becomes what level of perceived "adverse" qualities is acceptable in order to achieve the optimum "positive" qualities. There is a consensus to do something to improve transit; the difficult policy decision being which transit mode is preferred by the community. As difficult a decision as it is, it is important that the decision be made so that the community can move forward.

The following are specific conditions previously recommended and amended to date which should be included as part of any of the modes selected:

- Another DEIS process shall be initiated to continue the streetcar alignment to Middle Beach and North Beach, utilizing the Collins Avenue corridor, as recommended by the Miami Beach Planning Board.

- A local circulator bus route connecting the rail stations with the adjacent neighborhoods should be considered, particularly to areas of Middle and North Beach.

- Construction of an intermodal transit facility that would also accommodate the local circulator route, above mentioned.

- Replacement and enhancement of any displaced parking in Miami Beach.

- Replacement and enhancement of landscaping in project corridor.

- Operating funds for the system are from the Transit Tax or other County provided resources, not Miami Beach sources.

- During any construction, a public outreach and awareness effort managed by Miami Beach is to be funded from Transit Tax and other non-Miami Beach fund sources.

- Miami Beach maintains control over the design of stations on the appearance of vehicles used in the system.

- Funds are provided to Miami Beach for business impact mitigation.

- Complete an origin and destination study to guide future routing to serve the entirety of Miami Beach.

- Develop a definitive plan for mainland expansion that clearly delineates future routes beyond downtown Miami.

- Diversion of MDT bus traffic over causeways north of the MacArthur; and a plan for bus traffic that does not result in a bus depot being created in Miami Beach.

- Citizen's Oversight Board.

- DEIS operating parameters responsive to Miami Beach peak traffic needs.

- The City requests consideration by the MPO of an independent transit consultant to assist the City with the completion of the next phase of the study, to be selected by the City and paid by the MPO.

- The core team of Parsons Brinkerhoff shall be expanded to add an urban planning and community development expertise.

- During the FEIS, the City of Miami Beach will have a Commission-appointed technical advisory committee to review and monitor the study and to provide detailed design feedback as needed.

- The County collected contribution for Art in Public Places on the Miami Beach component is to be specifically earmarked for use in the City of Miami Beach, or provided to the City's Art in Public Places account.

- The City and the City of Miami will pursue an interlocal agreement to specify that the construction of a streetcar system linking the two communities will preclude the future development of a convention center in the City of Miami (City responsibility not MPO in the FEIS process).

Next Steps:

Subsequent to a decision by the City, the next steps towards further project development and implementation are:

- The MPO Governing Board, at its September 25, 2003 meeting, will consider an LPA for the technology and alignment for the entire Bay Link Project, based on the input received from the cities of Miami and Miami Beach.

- Following adoption by the MPO, the Preliminary Engineering/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PE/FEIS) Phase for the LPA will begin. During this phase, the process will provide opportunities for community review and comments.

- The Draft FEIS will be submitted for formal consideration and action by the cities of Miami Beach and Miami. At this stage, the City Commission will still have the opportunity to terminate the Bay Link project if conditions are not satisfactorily addressed.

- Subsequently, the MPO Board will act to approve the FEIS.

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will review the FEIS, along with the comments and mitigation measures, and a Draft Record of Decision (ROD) will be prepared. A ROD determines whether the proposed project is suitable or not to be funded by the Federal Government.

- Once the FEIS is accepted by the participating cities, the FEIS will be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the local MPO Board and FTA.
- The EPA will place a Notice of Availability for the FEIS in the Federal Register, and the FEIS will be distributed to agencies that have previously commented on the DEIS.
- Thirty days after the notice of availability is published, FTA may sign the ROD and grant location and design concept acceptance or issue separate RODs.
- FTA may then authorize funding for final design and project construction (upon acceptance of the ROD and availability of funding).
- Environmental clearance for Federal monies (contingent on ROD accepted by EPA).
- Full Funding Grant Agreement - FTA commitment of funding.
- Final Design.
- Right-of-way acquisition and project construction.

ATTACHMENT 1

Background

At the January 27, 2003 Commission Workshop to discuss the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor, known as Bay Link, the Administration presented the Alternatives Analysis / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) findings and recommendations, as well as the Light Rail Transit (LRT) alignment being recommended by both the Administration and South Beach stakeholders. The DEIS had been prepared for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the consulting firm Parsons Brinkerhoff, Who had been retained by the MPO for this purpose.

As a result of the Workshop, the Commission decided to further examine the Bay Link issues, at the regular Commission meeting of February 5, 2003. The Commission requested additional information, as several issues remained unclear. Staff was also asked to communicate the DEIS recommendations to the public so that greater understanding of the issue could be achieved in the community.

Subsequent to the January 27, 2003 Commission Workshop, three public meetings were held. The meetings confirmed that there was not good awareness and/or understanding of the Bay Link Project. Some of the more common questions raised were in regard to the size and scale of the project and vehicles, the potential loss of parking, and construction impacts. The DEIS analysis and recommendations were presented at each meeting.

At this stage of the project evolution, the recommendation before the Commission was still to use Light Rail Technology (LRT) as the preferred mode for transit in the City.

Research, analysis and discussion with the community continued as preparations were made for a March 10, 2003 meeting of the Commission to consider an LPA.

Part of the analysis and preparation for the March 10, 2003 Commission meeting was to undertake a fact-finding trip on transit systems and options. Given the heavy level of skepticism that was directed toward the existing DEIS, it was felt that personal observation of operating transit systems would be an important addition to the City's understanding of transit. The trip would enable the Commissioners and senior staff to gain a first hand knowledge, unfiltered by others, of operating transit systems and first hand information to address many of the concerns or questions that had been posed by the public and for which incomplete information may have been available. City Commissioners, the City Manager and City staff, made the fact-finding trip to San Francisco and Sacramento in California, and Portland, Oregon.

As part of the fact finding trip, the Commissioners and Administration sought out individual comments from business operators and/or owners, residents, consultants and decision-makers regarding their particular transit system. The questions posed concerned the following:

- Riders preferences for bus vs. riders on trains
- Single track vs. double track
- Light rail transit (LRT) vs. bus rapid transit (BRT)

- Curb side vs. center median
- Dedicated lane vs. mixed traffic operations

The transit system review provided insight and valuable experience-based information on a variety of topics, but primarily two principal insights:

- Light rail transit systems were shown to have a remarkable flexibility in different communities and under a wide variety of operating conditions. The systems reviewed showed successes in adapting to physical and community issues while still addressing the mass transit and congestion mitigation purposes for which they were created.

- The other significant first hand observation was that to date the City has not been given a full range of available system options and alternatives that Commissioners and senior staff was able to actually experience in the field trip. This latter observation has also confirmed the need to see and experience transit systems in order to make well-informed decisions. The first hand knowledge far surpassed the value of information which had been relayed to the Commission and senior staff through studies and presentations.

Specific observations of the transit system review are summarized in the following sub points. These observations were based on senior staff review and discussion. The direct observations of our citizen-elected Commission representatives were provided at the March 10, 2003 Commission meeting and provided unique and previously unavailable and unbiased insights to transit system value to the community.

- **Transit system mode.** The field trip provided confirmation that the best available mode of transit was a streetcar option, modified from previous discussions on rail options. The streetcar technology that is currently in use in Portland and in several European cities, such as Basel and Amsterdam, surpassed bus transit options on a direct pro and con analysis. Significantly, the system operations reviewed were able to support the theory that people make a choice to use streetcar transit at a much higher percentage than bus transit. The smaller streetcar option is also more in scale with the City of Miami Beach than previous car options discussed and directly addresses a number of concerns raised in community discussion.

- **Route alignments and operating conditions.** The field trip clearly illustrated that the previous assumptions of alignments and operating conditions needed to be expanded. The more rigid pre-field trip view was shown to be unnecessary for system success. Successful operations with both curb and center lane alignments and importantly, dedicated and shared lane configurations were viewed. With options of shared train and automobile traffic lanes also comes the opportunity to have a two-track system with little impact to traffic operations and the community. A shared right-of-way is also flexible and scaleable. If traffic conditions demand, the shared right-of-way can be dedicated during peak traffic hours and shared during non-peak hours to adjust to varying traffic flow conditions.

- **System appearance and aesthetic concerns.** A wide variety of station configurations and streetscapes were observed. Stations ran from large and formalized shelters with street furniture amenities to very simple raised medians or curbside bump outs. In each of the configurations the system intent, which was generally successful, was to blend

the station into the background environment. System function was not compromised by any of the design options. In a design phase, the community would be able to participate in choosing a station design that fit the specific environment with a great deal of flexibility. The systems reviewed also demonstrated a wide variety of landscape features and amenities such as public art. The opportunities to introduce these elements are strictly a community choice, but clearly can be done successfully. In systems that chose to utilize landscape, the electric wire used to power the streetcar tended to blend into the background.

The overhead electric wire was also seen in a variety of configurations. Systems ran from a rather unsightly collection of wires to rather simple single wire configurations that were not obtrusive. The technology to not use an electric wire system is available, but there are trade offs in the vehicle size, noise and pollution impacts that would have to be assessed.

Street beautification and the installation of public art. Successful examples of both were viewed and can be incorporated into any design undertaken for the City.

- **Impacts to the community, construction and long term.** In each community inquiries were made as to the impacts of construction. Clearly there will be impacts as with any project that the City builds. The level of impact that a streetcar system would have is no less than the impact of one of our upcoming neighborhood CIP projects. Portland was the best example of a community that had developed both construction phasing and business assistance programs to help mitigate the impacts of construction. The City of Portland cited that only one business, from a large sampling of businesses described as fragile, which went out of business as a result of their streetcar construction. Their success was based on both construction technique and business assistance provided. Many of the successful techniques used for outreach and business assistance can be incorporate into any plans pursued by the City to minimize adverse construction impacts. In all of the communities visited, the long term impacts on land use and economic vitality and sustainability were very positive. No community cited a negative influence as a result of the respective systems construction.

Subsequent to the productive fact finding trip to the West Coast to review transit systems, the Administration recommendation evolved to reflect and incorporate the new information gathered. It was very apparent to those on the fact finding trip that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) presented for the consideration of the City of Miami Beach by the MPO, left areas that required further exploration as possible transit modes. The City representatives that were able to participate in the transit fact finding trip observed a number of systems and operating conditions which had not been well documented or explained in earlier submissions to the City of Miami Beach. Importantly, these operating conditions were more appropriate to the unique environment of the City of Miami Beach than previously reported options.

The most significant change in the Administration recommendation that was presented to the City Commission at the March 10, 2003 Special Meeting was in the transit system mode. As a direct result of the fact-finding trip, the Administration recommended to the City Commission that a **different transit mode** from the previously recommended light rail option would be more beneficial to the City of Miami Beach. The more beneficial transit mode and new recommendation to the City Commission was a **streetcar transit system**.

The streetcar transit option is a smaller, lighter rail transit option that offers the City of Miami Beach a much better fit in terms of its scale and ability to blend into a developed urban environment.

In addition to the mode change, fact finding trip observations of transit system operating practices were also very significant and warranted incorporation into the Administration recommendation. The success of in street running streetcar operations in shared lanes of traffic was seen as ideal for Miami Beach and appropriate for our unique environment as a means of achieving a better fit in the community. The following two changes were made to the Administration recommendation as a direct result of the fact finding trip:

- The Streetcar mode is recommended.
- A two-track configuration is recommended in the basic loop configuration previously recommended, utilizing shared lanes where feasible and in a center median alignment.

Previous elements of the Administration recommendation dealing with route and conditions which were suggested for a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), if authorized by the City Commission remained essentially as in the original recommendation and are summarized as follows;

- A Modified route Alternative B-2, a bi-directional loop in South Beach, utilizing the following route alignment: MacArthur Causeway, Alton Road, South Pointe Drive, Washington Avenue, 17th Street, Convention Center Drive, Dade Boulevard, and Alton Road back to downtown Miami.

This recommendation to proceed with a FEIS is conditioned upon a number of requirements that, together with the chosen LPA, would constitute the complete Miami Beach recommendation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Support for a light rail Bay Link system is premised on addressing the following conditions:

- Another DEIS process shall be initiated to continue the streetcar alignment to Middle Beach and North Beach, utilizing the Collins Avenue corridor, as recommended by the Miami Beach Planning Board.

- A local circulator bus route connecting the rail stations with the adjacent neighborhoods should be considered, particularly to areas of Middle and North Beach.

- Construction of an intermodal transit facility that would also accommodate the local circulator route, above mentioned.

- Replacement and enhancement of any displaced parking in Miami Beach.

- Replacement and enhancement of landscaping in project corridor.

- Operating funds for the system are from the Transit Tax or other County provided resources, not Miami Beach sources.

- During any construction, a public outreach and awareness effort managed by Miami Beach is to be funded from Transit Tax and other non-Miami Beach fund sources.

- Miami Beach maintains control over the design of stations on the appearance of vehicles used in the system.

- Funds are provided to Miami Beach for business impact mitigation.

- Complete an origin and destination study to guide future routing to serve the entirety of Miami Beach.

- Develop a definitive plan for mainland expansion that clearly delineates future routes beyond downtown Miami.

- Diversion of MDT bus traffic over causeways north of the MacArthur; and a plan for bus traffic that does not result in a bus depot being created in Miami Beach.

- Citizen's Oversight Board.

- DEIS operating parameters responsive to Miami Beach peak traffic needs.

- The City requests consideration by the MPO of an independent transit consultant to assist the City with the completion of the next phase of the study, to be selected by the City and paid by the MPO.

- The core team of Parsons Brinkerhoff shall be expanded to add an urban planning and community development expertise.

- During the FEIS, the City of Miami Beach will have a Commission-appointed technical advisory committee to review and monitor the study and to provide detailed design feedback as needed.

- The County collected contribution for Art in Public Places on the Miami Beach component is to be specifically earmarked for use in the City of Miami Beach, or provided to the City's Art in Public Places account.

- The City and the City of Miami will pursue an interlocal agreement to specify that the construction of a streetcar system linking the two communities will preclude the future development of a convention center in the City of Miami (City responsibility not MPO in the FEIS process).

Reasons for the Administration's mode and route selection:

- Provides an efficient and affordable connection to a large regional transit system.

- The streetcar transit mode offers a premium transit system that captures choice riders and increases transit use through a quality ride

- Mode and operating flexibility allows very limited impact on current parking.

- Provides a local circulation function within South Beach.

- Allows reasonable access to most elements/ destination points in South Beach, such as the Theater of Performing Arts, Convention Center, Cultural Campus, Ocean Drive, Flamingo Park, Washington Avenue, Lincoln Road, South Pointe, and Rebecca Towers, Visitor's Center, Botanical Gardens, City Hall and Supermarkets.

- Transit mode offers ability to construct with limited disruption to affected corridors

- Transit mode offers the best opportunity for long term community health and sustainability

- Preserves road capacity within the right-of-way, while minimizing impact on travel lanes.

- Provides for beautification in the impacted area.

- Provides transit service to a wide variety of stakeholders, residences, businesses, tourists and visitors.

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

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September 11, 2003

Mr. Jose Luis Mesa
Director
Metropolitan Planning Organization
111 N.W. 1st Street
Suite 910
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Mr. Mesa

This letter transmits the City of Miami Beach amended resolution approving the continuation of the Bay Link project with the Final Environmental Impact Statement / Preliminary Engineering (FEIS/PE) phase of study. The resolution also selects a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the City of Miami Beach.

In addition find enclosed a copy of the Commission Memorandum and a copy of the HDR Engineering, Inc., final report dated September 8, 2003.

Please let me know if you need anything else in preparation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting on September 25, 2003.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Middaugh
Assistant City Manager

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