

Memorandum



DATE: January 10, 2013

TO: Honorable Xavier L. Suarez
Commissioner – District 7

FROM: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor 

SUBJECT: Response to Inquiry Regarding the Bear Cut Bridge

Your recent inquiry from January 8, 2013 regarding the Bear Cut Bridge was forwarded to the Public Works and Waste Management Department (PWWM) for review and appropriate action. Please be aware that at my request, PWWM staff reviewed and modified the Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) and re-opened one additional westbound lane exclusively for automobile traffic (no trucks are allowed on the open lane).

The following responses to your questions will provide further information on this modified plan:

1. *It seems that we would be able to use either or both of the westbound lanes exclusively for automobile traffic.*

As of approximately 1:00 p.m. today, Wednesday, January 9, 2013, one additional westbound lane has been re-opened to car traffic only. Opening both westbound lanes would require motorists to merge back into one lane before the Virginia Key Beach Drive signal and would add to confusion for the truck drivers who remain restricted to one of the counterflowed lanes.

The re-opening of the one added lane has been coordinated between PWWM, the Village of Key Biscayne and the Miami-Dade Police Department.

2. *We have heard, unofficially, that the completion of the work will take one year.*

Regarding the length of time to complete the construction of the bridge, PWWM staff is taking all necessary steps to achieve completion of the work within a nine month period from the start of the construction. Work is anticipated to be performed on a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week schedule.

3. *The need to keep users of the bridge as knowledgeable of the situation as we are at the County is paramount. Residents, drivers, pedestrians, and cyclist cannot be left wondering as to the status of this project.*

Each implementation or modification of the MOT plan will include all necessary traffic signs and barricades to safely route traffic. The Police are in place at both entrances of the bridge to ensure that only automobiles use the additional lane being opened on the bridge and will continue to be involved to assist with motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic control of the Virginia Key Beach Drive traffic signals.

This updated MOT will be followed with construction of smoother, temporary routing with new asphalt, plastic curbing, delineators, pavement markings and traffic signs.

The County has focused on four areas of public information. First, Senior County staff has maintained regular and constant contact with the Village of Key Biscayne who have, in turn, updated their residents regarding the situation. Second, new signage has been installed to reach drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other users of the Causeway. Third, the cycling community has been contacted through already-open channels with County engineers. Fourth, the County has kept open communication with the media so that occasional users of the Causeway are informed of the situation.

Should you require further information, please contact me at 305-375-1880.

- c: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa and Members
 - Board of County Commissioners
 - Honorable Franklin Caplan, Mayor, Village of Key Biscayne
 - Honorable Mayra Peña Lindsay, Vice Mayor, Village of Key Biscayne
 - John C. Gilbert, Village Manager, Village of Key Biscayne
 - Johnny Martinez, P.E., City Manager, City of Miami
 - R.A. Cuevas, Jr., County Attorney
 - Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
 - Kathleen Woods-Richardson, Director
 - Public Works and Waste Management Department
 - J. D. Patterson, Jr., Acting Director, Miami-Dade Police Department

From: "Padron, Joanne (DIST7)" <joannep@miamidade.gov>
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Subject: Bear Cut Bridge

Dear Mayor Gimenez:

Yesterday I spoke with Chip Iglesias about the Bear Cut Bridge situation, and he said he would convey the essence of our conversation to you. By this memo, I would like to memorialize our conversation.

The residents of Miami-Dade County, and particularly those of the Village of Key Biscayne, need to have the following three points addressed by your Office as soon as possible:

- 1) The main concern expressed by the inspectors was the weight of the heavy trucks crossing the bridge. If we eliminate trucks from the equation, it seems that we would be able to use either or both of the west-bound lanes exclusively for automobile traffic.
- 2) We have heard, unofficially, that completion of the work will take one year. In my view, this is unacceptable. A way needs to be found to accelerate this process so that completion of the project takes place before the start of hurricane season. Obviously, the nightmare scenario is a mandatory evacuation of the island and the bridge still in a state of disrepair. We need to use every resource at our disposal to make sure that this deadline is met.
- 3) The need to keep users of the bridge as knowledgeable of the situation as we are at the County is paramount. Signage is important, but it must be up-to-date. Residents, drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists cannot be left wondering as to the status of this project.

As you are well aware, time is of the essence. I await your response.

Sincerely,

Xavier L. Suarez