

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-1**  
**February 9, 2021**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Parking Director, Kevin Kinney**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Mark Trowbridge**

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Agenda Item G-1[Start: 4:55 p.m.]

An update regarding the Transportation Planning Organization’s (TPO) SMART Demonstration Projects and a discussion on implementing a funding strategy to commence weekend service for the Coral Gables trolley. (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: G-1, Vice Mayor.

City Attorney Ramos: G-1 is an update regarding the Transportation Planning Organization’s (TPO) SMART Demonstration Projects.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay. I’m going to be very brief on this. The purpose of putting this on the agenda today, first, I want to thank staff and I wanted to, obviously thank my colleagues for

*City Commission Meeting*  
*February 9, 2021*

supporting my legislation last year when we did a resolution to push for Saturday and Sunday service of the trolley service. I just want to tell you one thing. I was on the Mile this weekend both on Saturday and Sunday, its bustling. Its incredible how many people are out there. Maybe it was a mix of the great weather or sunny, but it was incredible to see so many people on the Mile enjoying themselves, having a great time, everybody was complying, everybody was having a good time, they are outside eating. What does that mean? I think that if we in the near future are able to finally add trolley service to the weekend, I think it will bear fruit, and I think that it will be something that will be a paradigm shift to the downtown. The resolution is in place from this Commission. Now my goal as you represent on the Transportation Planning Organization for the last two years, trust me, very difficult to make these meetings. I go to all the meetings in downtown. I get there with my colleagues and we have a sit-down discussion. I ask our representative, excuse me, the Director of the TPO, Ms. Boucle, who is a very nice lady, very sharp, to make me aware of what the forthcoming demonstration project program is coming. I want us to be aware, I want us, not only to be cognizant that the purpose of my memo which is detailed and explains very well what the TPO is going to be offering, in regard to these demonstration projects. I want to line up and make sure that we are in lockstep in ensuring that the trolley service, I know that Sundays maybe difficult now, but at least to start with Saturdays. We have the resolution from the Commission. You have the deadline and all the information in regard to when the demonstration projects are coming, are going to be opening up for submission. I spoke to Ms. Boucle and she assured me that extension of trolley services would be viewed in a positive light in regard to the demonstration project, that's number one.

Parking Director Kinney: They've already done that.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes, I know. But you can't submit till May.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes – no, but we've already, in fact, in December we received notice that we received the grant for Saturday for a service development and the Finance Director sent in the certification of our matching funds and we are now just waiting for the grant agreement from the state and that money will be available after July 1<sup>st</sup>. So, our plan is and what we are moving towards is, implementing Saturday service this summer.

Vice Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Parking Director Kinney: But this grant that you made us aware of is actually for funds for the State Fiscal Year 23, and we will apply and if there is anything, we can get money for, we will go for.

*City Commission Meeting  
February 9, 2021*

Vice Mayor Lago: But I also thought it was a good opportunity to also make my colleagues aware that if they have any ideas of transportation initiatives that we can do in the city outside of, obviously Saturday and Sunday, I would love to extend it to Sunday, the trolley service, but if we can do anything else with the Freebie in other areas of the city. If we can do anything else that we can bring to this community to connect us, not only to ourselves, from one area to the city to the other, but also to neighboring communities, because one day I would love to see our trolley go up Ponce, go in front of the University of Miami, address all those businesses that are on Ponce and then hopefully connect with South Miami, down 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, West Miami, and then do that loop coming back to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. That may be difficult right now, because we may not have the ridership, but I think one day if we are able to connect between South Miami and West Miami and University of Miami, I think it's a great opportunity right there.

Parking Director Kinney: That service development grant may be the perfect way to test that.

Vice Mayor Lago: Perfect. That's exactly – you basically said it before I said it. I appreciate it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You want to make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: I don't think there is a motion to be made. We've already made a motion about Saturday and Sunday service. I just wanted to just bring this to your attention and tell my colleagues, because again, we never get the opportunity to speak. So, start thinking about different ideas on how to expand mobility in the city. This is the money right here 2023 and also with demonstration projects from the state and from the TPO.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, Mark Trowbridge wanted to make a comment on this.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Have him come on, yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Kevin, by the way, I appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thank you Mr. Mayor, just a very brief comment. And I'll reiterate what the Vice Mayor shared. We were pleased to be before you a little more than a year ago about the expansion of the trolley service to Saturday and Sunday, and very pleased that this continues to be something that the city supports. We see it now, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, as an economic recovery tool, and so, thank you very much for continuing to put your good support behind this, and we look forward to the demonstration project and co-branding the recovery and co-branding our businesses. And what a great link between our downtown Miracle Mile, all of our shops along Ponce de Leon and down to the shops at Merrick Park. Thank you.

*City Commission Meeting  
February 9, 2021*

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.