

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Pro-Transit Residents Group Urges Protection of Travel Lanes with the Baylink Transportation Project**

## **Endorses Options That Eliminate Unnecessary Conflict Between Drivers and Rapid Transit**

A recently formed civic group, the Alliance for Reliable Transport (“ART”) calls upon the consultants preparing a review of rapid transit options for the City of Miami Beach to formally eliminate from further consideration a divisive rapid transit option that never gained the support of residents. This option—to reduce some travel lanes in South Beach—was only one of several scenarios considered in an earlier study funded by the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”). It has been dismissed as being unnecessary by light rail proponents but continues to be highlighted by some anti mass-transit advocates.

According to the ART steering committee, the idea of reducing some transit lanes is a ‘dead issue’ that was debated at length in earlier meetings and found to be unnecessary. The group is particularly critical of claims by some Baylink opponents attempting to create fear among drivers that reduced travel lanes are an *inevitable* impact of any rapid transit project.

In fact, reduced travel lanes were simply one option analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the preliminary study funded by the MPO. However, that study’s consultants assured the City Commission that a light rail transit system could be implemented *without* reducing travel lanes and so this option was consistently opposed by residents groups at public workshops and hearings on the project held back in February and March of this year. And no Miami Beach Commissioner has voiced support for any option that would reduce travel lanes.

Accordingly, the ART steering committee requests the consultants working on the transit options study for the City Commission to reject this option as unnecessary, thereby preserving existing travel lanes on proposed streetcar routes along Alton Road and Washington Avenue. The group emphasizes the lack of support for reducing travel lanes among transit advocates, noting that the Baylink study includes other rapid transit alternatives which avoid adverse impacts on Miami Beach’s roadways—and that may actually *improve* travel time for drivers.

Formally removing this option will help refocus debate on any remaining areas of genuine concern.

The Alliance for Reliable Transport ([www.protransit.org](http://www.protransit.org)) was formed in April, 2003 by concerned Miami Beach residents, in cooperation with local businesses and other organizations, in order to improve public dialogue on transit issues and ensure a voice for current and potential transit users. It has adopted a position in support of the return of streetcar service to Miami Beach, providing a reliable, clean and attractive transit alternative that addresses growing traffic congestion and meets the needs of local residents, commuters and visitors alike. The public and the press are invited to weekly meetings held at 7:30 PM on Monday evenings, at 924 Pennsylvania Avenue.

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