


# Memorandum



**Date:** December 7, 2021

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor 

**Subject:** Report Providing Recommendation for the Rickenbacker Causeway

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This memo provides my recommendation for the Rickenbacker Causeway. Throughout this process, I have emphasized the critical importance of addressing major transportation and infrastructure needs for our roadways and bridges — maintaining them not just for the present but to enhance our resilience for the future, given the escalating impacts of climate change and storm surge. Safety and mobility are also paramount, both for the residents of Key Biscayne and because the causeway is an amenity that draws thousands of cyclists and pedestrians.

On July 8, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) unanimously adopted Resolution No. R-648-21, approving my recommendation to publish a solicitation for an open and competitive process for the same project purpose as the unsolicited proposal known as Plan Z. The subsequent competitive *Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 01982, Develop, Maintain and Operate the Rickenbacker and Venetian Causeways and Associated Recreational Elements* was advertised on August 15, 2021, and remains under the Cone of Silence.

Since advertisement of the RFP, there have been many important questions and concerns raised about the unsolicited proposal process as well as the project. The County’s RFP regulations create significant limitations regarding public engagement and communications and, throughout this process, I’ve stressed the importance of ensuring that the County has an opportunity to obtain sufficient public input — an essential part of the decision-making process. That is why I pressed to incorporate public feedback and speak in the Sunshine at all possible opportunities.

On October 5, 2021, the Board approved Resolution No. R-942-21, directing the removal of the Venetian Causeway from the RFP. The Board also approved Resolution No. R-979-21 to extend the time for submittal of the proposals in response to the RFP to March 1, 2022, to allow time to make the necessary adjustments to the RFP and allow sufficient time to complete and review a Value for Money (VfM) Assessment.

As per my direction, the County engaged a consultant, IMG Rebel Advisory, Inc., under our existing P3 Infrastructure and Financial Advisory Services pool, to perform a VfM Assessment. The VfM analyzed both the project delivery and financing options for the Rickenbacker Causeway project and evaluated the various delivery models to determine which offers the best “value for money.”

On November 19, 2021, I released the Value for Money Assessment and Executive Report. The VfM confirmed that an integrated delivery model that combines design, construction, maintenance, financing, and operation into a single contract following a conventional public private partnership (P3) procurement process is expected to deliver the best “value for money.” The VfM also confirmed that under current conditions, such Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain (DBFOM) model is the best model to minimize the County’s financial risks and financial obligations.

Based on the findings from the VfM, the consultant recommended two strategic procurement options to further ensure "value for money" for the public.

**1. Cancel this procurement and restart a procurement later –**

- First, allow time to confirm federal funding availability, further develop the project, engage stakeholders, and complete the NEPA process.
- Second, issue a solicitation – recommend use of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to pre-qualify proposers, then issue RFP to require more detailed proposals with a committed price.

**2. Continue this procurement with adjustments –**

- Add a prequalification phase to increase market interest.
- Extend both the RFP and Interim Agreement phases to allow time to confirm federal funding availability, further develop the project, stakeholder engagement, and complete the NEPA process.

Given these findings, I convened a virtual public meeting on December 6, 2021, as I committed to do, following the publication of the VfM, to allow for further feedback from the community and stakeholders. Based on the input and feedback received from hundreds of members of the community and key stakeholders, along with the recommendation from Commissioner Regalado, I am recommending that we move forward with the Rickenbacker Causeway project in the following way:

**Cancel this procurement and restart a procurement later –**

- First, allow time to confirm federal funding availability, further develop the project, engage stakeholders, and complete the NEPA process.
- Second, issue a two-step solicitation – first issuing an RFQ to pre-qualify proposers, then issue an RFP to require more detailed proposals with a committed price.

Throughout this entire process, my goal has been to ensure that we address major transportation, infrastructure, safety, and mobility needs with an emphasis on resiliency for today and the future, in the most efficient way possible. I look forward to discussing this recommendation, which I believe is in the best interest of the County and our stakeholders with the Board. This report will be placed on the next available Board agenda.

Should you require additional information, as the project remains under the Cone of Silence, please contact Rita Silva, Internal Services Department at [rita.silva@miamidade.gov](mailto:rita.silva@miamidade.gov).

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