



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 25-074

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: May 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Temporary Deviation from the Operational Schedule of the SE 17th Street Bridge (E. Clay Shaw, Jr. Bridge)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update regarding a temporary deviation from the normal drawbridge operation schedule for the SE 17th Street Bridge (E. Clay Shaw, Jr. Bridge). The deviation will be in effect from June 2, 2025 through November 28, 2025.

Given concerns related to frequent drawbridge openings, heavy traffic volumes along SE 17th Street, and new traffic generators in the area which affect traffic flow along the SE 17th Street corridor, City staff has aimed to find methods to balance the needs of marine and roadway traffic. As such, the City collaborated with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida and the bridge owner, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), to gain support for deviations to the operational schedule of the drawbridge.

On May 5, 2025, City staff submitted a request to the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to consider permanently changing the schedule of the SE 17th Street Bridge (Attachment 1). On May 22, 2025, the USCG responded to the City's request, via a letter to FDOT – District IV, and is authorizing a temporary deviation of the SE 17th Street Bridge (Attachment 2).

The temporary deviation will be effective from 6 a.m. on June 2, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. on November 28, 2025. The deviation is eliminating the current bridge openings on weekdays (except Federal holidays) at 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. As is currently the case, United States vessels and tugs with tows, upon proper signal, will be passed through at any time.

This temporary deviation will be used to evaluate if a permanent change to the operational schedule of the drawbridge is needed. City staff anticipates that the operational deviation will improve vehicular throughput and reduce congestion along SE 17th Street during morning and afternoon peak hours, while not significantly affecting maritime traffic.

For further information, please contact Milos Majstorovic, Acting Director of Transportation and Mobility, at 954-828-5216 or mmajstorovic@fortlauderdale.gov

Attachments:

1. May 5, 2025, letter to the USCG from the City of Fort Lauderdale
2. May 22, 2025, letter from the USCG to FDOT – District IV

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Acting City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors



May 5, 2025

Mr. Randall Overton
Director of Bridge Program
United States Coast Guard District 7
909 SE 1st Avenue, Suite 432
Miami, FL 33131

Subject: Request for a Modification to the Schedule of SE 17th Street (Brooks Memorial) Bridge, Mile 1065.9 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Dear Mr. Overton,

The purpose of this letter is to formally request that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) consider permanently changing the schedule of the SE 17th Street drawbridge, located in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Under the current schedule, the SE 17th Street bridge opens on the hour and half-hour without established periods of lockdown. Frequent bridge openings combined with heavy traffic volumes along SE 17th Street of approximately 35,000 vehicles a day (according to Florida Department of Transportation data), adversely affect mobility and contribute to significant congestion along SE 17th Street.

With the upcoming opening of the Broward County Convention Center and number of other projects in the vicinity, traffic volumes in the area are expected to further increase. The City is working together with Broward County on improving traffic signalization along the corridor as well as improving transit options with the goal of reducing the number of vehicles, while simultaneously increasing person throughput, however, additional relief is needed.

With the intent of balancing the needs of marine and roadway traffic, City staff collaborated with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF) and the Florida Department of Transportation (bridge owner), to ensure both entities are supportive and do not object to changing the bridge schedule. On March 13, 2025, the City held a meeting with members of MIASF, and the USCG to learn more about the formal request process, share objectives, and gain feedback.

Office of the City Manager

101 NE Third Avenue, Suite 2100
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Telephone (954) 828-5013, Fax (954) 828-5599

www.fortlauderdale.gov



As a result of coordination and with the goal of ensuring the proper balance between the needs of marine and roadway traffic, the City is requesting that the USCG consider the following bridge schedule:

The draw will open on the hour and half-hour, except Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) from 6:50 a.m. to 9:10 a.m. and from 3:50 p.m. to 6:10 p.m., the draw need only open on the hour.

Note this recommendation represents a modification to the current bridge schedule consisting of opening on the hour (i.e. every 60 minutes) rather than the hour and half hour (i.e. every 30 minutes).

We strongly believe that the proposed bridge schedule, if approved, will improve vehicular throughput and reduce congestion along SE 17th Street during morning and afternoon peak hours, while not significantly affecting the maritime traffic.

The City appreciates the USCG's consideration of this request. Milos Majstorovic, Acting Director of Transportation and Mobility Department, will serve as the City's representative on this initiative and can be reached at 954-828-5216 or via email at mmajstorovic@fortlauderdale.gov

Sincerely,



Ben Rogers
Acting Assistant City Manager

- c: Rickelle Williams, City Manager
Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Acting Director
Steve Braun, FDOT District 4 Secretary
Paul Lampley, FDOT District 4 Director of Transportation Operations
John Krane, FDOT District 4 Director of Transportation Development
Jennifer N. Zercher, United States Coast Guard District 7 Bridge Management Specialist

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security**
**United States
Coast Guard**



Commander
United States Coast Guard
Seventh District

909 S.E. 1st Avenue, Room 432
Miami, FL 33131-3028
Staff Symbol: (dpb)
Phone: 571-607-5951
Email: jennifer.n.zercher@uscg.mil

16593/2889
May 22, 2025

FDOT – District IV
Kelley Hall, PE
Structures Maintenance Engineer
3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Delivered via email: kelley.hall@dot.state.fl.us

Dear Ms. Hall:

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is authorized to temporary deviate from drawbridge operation regulation, 33 CFR 117.261(bb)(8), that governs the SE 17th Street (Brooks Memorial) Bridge, across the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AICW), mile 1065.9, at Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Under this temporary deviation, the SE 17th Street Bridge shall open on the hour and half-hour; except that from 6:50 a.m. to 9:10 a.m. and from 3:50 p.m. to 6:10 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, the drawbridge shall open once an hour at the top of the hour.

Public vessels of the United States and tugs with tows, upon proper signal, will be passed through anytime. Additionally, per 33 CFR 117.31(b), the drawtender shall take all reasonable measures to have the draw open, regardless of the operating schedule for

- Vessels in distress where a delay would endanger life or property.
- Commercial vessels engaged in rescue or emergency salvage operations; and
- Vessels seeking shelter from severe weather.

This temporary deviation is effective from 6 a.m. on June 2, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. on November 28, 2025.

The City of Fort Lauderdale requested the Coast Guard consider placing additional opening restrictions during weekday rush hour periods to assist with vehicle congestion. This deviation will test a change to the drawbridge operating schedule to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is needed.

The U.S. Coast Guard will announce the temporary change to the bridge operating regulation via the Local Notice to Mariners and a Broadcast Notice to Mariners.

16593/2889
May 22, 2025

A notice of temporary deviation from regulations, and request for comments will be published in the Federal Register. Comments may be submitted under docket number **USCG-2025-0464** using Federal Decision-Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>. This test deviation will run simultaneously with a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), under the same name and docket number. Both documents can be found at <https://www.regulations.gov> and comments can be made to either document.

In accordance with the 2018 Coast Guard Authorization Act (P.L.115-288), Section 832 d.l. B, the bridge owner, FDOT, must notify the public by publishing notice of the temporary change to drawbridge operating schedule in a newspaper of general circulation in the place where the bridge is located. FDOT must also notify the office of transportation and law enforcement organization with jurisdiction over the roadway that abuts the approaches to the bridge. Please inform the local police agencies not to park their vehicles on the bridge structure.

This temporary deviation may not be changed or extended without written approval from the U.S. Coast Guard. This temporary deviation is conditional and may be withdrawn at any time if the U.S. Coast Guard determines that the safety of human life, the environment, or the needs of navigation become endangered.

In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the bridge must immediately return to its regular operating schedule at the end of the designated time-period. The imposition of civil penalties may result for failure to ensure that all requirements of this temporary deviation are followed in their entirety.

If you have any questions please contact USCG Sector Miami Waterways Division at (305) 535-4317, email SectorMiamiWaterways@uscg.mil or my representative, Ms. Jennifer Zercher at (571) 607-5951 or email Jennifer.N.Zercher@uscg.mil.

Sincerely,



RANDALL D. OVERTON, MPA
Director, District Bridge Program
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

E-Copy: USCG Sector Miami, SectorMiamiWaterways@uscg.mil
City of Fort Lauderdale, MMajstorovic@fortlauderdale.gov,
RickelleWilliams@fortlauderdale.gov, BRogers@fortlauderdale.gov
MIASF, Patience@MIASF.org