



Miami-Dade County  
**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General  
*Accredited by the State of Florida Commission on Law Enforcement*



June 1, 2020

The Honorable Eileen Higgins  
County Commissioner, District 5  
111 NW First Street, Suite 220  
Miami, FL 33128

Re: RFP No. 01353 – Rapid Mass Transit  
Solution for the Beach Corridor Trunk Line

Dear Commissioner Higgins:

I am in receipt of your letter of May 27, 2020 expressing serious concerns about the findings of an investigation conducted by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) regarding the itinerary of a trip to China and Japan made by Miami-Dade County public officials in March of 2018 organized by the Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OEDIT). As you have noted, the results of this investigation were not known to you on May 19, 2020, when you made the motion to proceed with the evaluation of the proposal submitted by Miami Beach Monorail, LLC – the lone respondent to RFP No. 01353 for development of the Beach Corridor (this respondent being the same who had earlier submitted an unsolicited proposal to the County for the Beach Corridor project). The COE investigative report was officially stamped closed on May 19, 2020; however, it was not issued to the Office of the Mayor until May 22<sup>nd</sup>, several days after the Board of County Commissioners authorized the Administration to proceed.

While the COE concluded that the evidence its investigators gathered was insufficient to level charges of ethics violations, the findings of this report create serious concern regarding the integrity of this corridor project. The attempts to shield meetings with the Chairman of the Genting Group, a partner in the Miami Beach Monorail, LLC, from public scrutiny creates an appearance of impropriety.

The COE investigation reported that a separate Hong Kong leg of the trip (a side-trip not included in the itinerary of the OEDIT trade mission to Asia) was not disclosed pursuant to media requests for the Mayor's itinerary. The Hong Kong trip was for meetings reportedly arranged by a local partner of the Miami Beach Monorail, LLC. for County officials. The delegation met with the Chairman of the Genting Group. Other meetings during the Hong Kong side-trip were arranged by a County department director using

WhatsApp and private email to conduct county business. The use of temporary travel phones on this trade mission, and the subsequent deletion of any stored data on the phones, is another matter covered in the COE report. All of these issues warrant a full airing by the Board to determine the appropriate course of action with regard to this project.

In your letter, you asked for my input on “who best can lead an objective RFP process moving forward given the findings of the [COE’s] report.” Your request presumes Board action to limit the involvement of certain county officials in the process. If that occurs, the OIG remains available to provide input. Your intended “motion to reconsider” certainly deserves support, in order for the Board to decide the best path forward in light of the findings by the COE.

Findings like these erode public confidence in the Miami-Dade County government. In cases like this, it is up to the governing body to take corrective action to address public perception. Reconsideration of the action taken at the last meeting of the Board will create an opportunity for this COE investigative report to be openly discussed. After hearing from the COE, to the extent the Board modifies this procurement process, the OIG will ensure full compliance with the Board’s policy directives.

Sincerely,



Marty T. Cagle  
Inspector General

cc: Mayor Carlos Gimenez  
Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson and the Board of County Commissioners  
Abigail Price-Williams, County Attorney  
Edward Marquez, Deputy Mayor  
Jennifer Moon, Deputy Mayor  
Tara C. Smith, Director, Internal Services Department  
Alice Bravo, Director, Department of Transportation and Public Works  
Jose Arrojo, Executive Director, Commission on Ethics and Public Trust  
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor