



## FACTSHEET

# Connecting Miami:

## I-395 Underdeck and Heritage Trail Project



### The I-395 Underdeck and Heritage Trail

The Underdeck is a planned public landscape that weaves below the elevated I-395 roadway, creating a 33-acre urban open space and streetscapes that will reunite the urban fabric of Overtown, a historically black neighborhood that was disconnected during highway construction in the 1960s. A mile-long "Heritage Trail" connects neighborhoods across active rail tracks, linking Overtown to Biscayne Bay, celebrating the diverse cultural heritage of Miami, and establishing a unifying landscape destination for the City of Miami.

This forward-looking project with a cost of \$82.7 million will provide a much-needed recreational green space for the rapidly growing Center City population, transforming the public realm beneath the highway to a vibrant, welcoming, and restorative community asset to enhance the mind, body, and spirit of users of all ages and abilities. Key project elements include the Heritage Trail shared-use trail, extensive landscaping and urban tree canopy, multiple play areas, interactive water features, a dog play area, amphitheater, sports courts, comfort stations, and community-based public art installations.

**Connecting Miami: I-395 Underdeck and Heritage Trail** will provide a safe place for walking, jogging, biking, and scooting, encouraging non-vehicular urban transportation options, while improving quality of life, economic vitality, and social equity for all through the creation of an environmentally sustainable and resilient urban landscape.

### Background

The Connecting Miami: I-395/SR 836/I-95 Design Build Project is a partnership between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX). Highway improvements are located within the City of Miami, extending from NW 17 Avenue on SR 836, through the SR 836/ I-395/I-95 Midtown Interchange, out to the MacArthur Causeway Bridge; additional improvements extend along I-95 from NW 8 Street to NW 29 Street for pavement replacement. The project is planned for completion in late 2027 at a cost of \$840 million.

Acknowledging the historic impact of highway construction on Overtown and Miami's urban fabric, the project includes the I-395 "Underdeckerdeck" – a public open space, created by an innovative structural design that raises the highway and reduces columns for increased light and air. As a significant civic and community landscape, the City of Miami will program, operate, and maintain the Underdeck featuring the Heritage Trail to serve as an everyday neighborhood amenity for local communities and a destination for performances, events, and community celebrations.

### Focus: Community | Safety | Mobility | Sustainability | Connectivity

The I-395 Underdeck and Heritage Trail will:

**Restore CONNECTIVITY** to a neighborhood fractured by highway construction, which disproportionately affected marginalized populations, reconnecting people and place along and across the corridor, and promoting more equitable access to safe and affordable urban transportation options.

**Transform COMMUNITY** by reconstructing the "under the highway" urban barrier into an active public open space and shared-use trail connecting Overtown, Downtown, Arts & Entertainment District and Edgewater/Midtown.

**Enhance SAFETY** for pedestrians and bicyclists along and across the I-395 corridor with the Heritage Trail, a bridge crossing of the Florida East Coast Railway/Brightline tracks, and numerous enhanced pedestrian street crossings.

**Increase MOBILITY** for pedestrians and bicyclists along the east-west I-395 corridor, as well as reconnecting north-south neighborhoods and reinforcing bicycle routes and greenways within the City of Miami.

**Promote SUSTAINABILITY** through design and engineering that incorporates long-term durability and environmental resiliency, while meeting community needs for green space and recreation that enhances neighborhood vitality.



### Planned Grant Application

- ▶ **Grant Type:**  
2023 RCN Grant Program
- ▶ **Project Type:**  
Urban
- ▶ **Applicant Project Sponsor:**  
City of Miami
- ▶ **Grant Request:**  
\$60,353,730
- ▶ **Total Future Project Cost:**  
\$82,653,730
- ▶ **Project Location:**  
Miami-Dade County
- ▶ **Was a Federal Grant Application for this Project Submitted Previously?:**  
YES - RCP (2022)  
RAISE (2023)
- ▶ **NEPA/Environmental Permitting Status:**  
Complete

### COMMUNITY AMENITIES







## PROJECT MERIT CRITERIA

- The Underdeck is designed to reconnect the urban fabric of Overtown, transforming this historic barrier into a landscape that unifies the City of Miami, promoting **EQUITY** and **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE** through the creation of a green open space with opportunities for respite and recreation, as well as integrated pedestrian and bike routes, in a location that currently lacks these amenities.
- The Heritage Trail follows Universal Design guidelines to create a space that welcomes users of all ages and abilities. This new community **ACCESS** will be enhanced by wide pathways, traffic-calmed street crossings, three comfort stations, lighting, and a broad pedestrian bridge crossing active FEC railroad tracks. Multimodal connectivity will include bicycle lanes; greenways and trails; micromobility hubs for rideshare and scooters; and walkable access to a full hierarchy of local to intercity transit options as well as the free City trolleys.
- The Underdeck will replace the barren and uninviting “under the highway” realm with a landscape designed for **street-level neighborhood integration and enhancement**, a **FACILITY WELL-SUITED** to the community. The highway is designed for enhanced clearances, rising from 25 feet by Biscayne

Bay to 60 feet in Overtown. Combined with a significant reduction in bridge columns from 800 to 94, the open space will be flooded with light and air, while providing shade from the tropical sun and cover from rain showers. The Underdeck will replace the barren freeway space with an urban oasis reconnecting neighborhoods at 5% of the cost of a freeway lid project.

- The open space corridor design is a **COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH**, featuring public art installations and memorials that commemorate significant community figures and cultures. Site programming was also driven by community input, achieving a mix of features that will serve local residents and visitors. Key elements include interactive water features, an amphitheater, play areas, a dog play area, comfort stations, vending kiosks, diverse seating options, and drinking water stations for people and pets. These features have been identified through extensive community engagement, and funded through **PARTNERING** with FDOT and two Community Redevelopment Authorities.
- The mile-long Heritage Trail will foster **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT** north and south of the open space, and across the active FEC railway

**tracks**. It will facilitate mobility, unite neighborhoods through a shared green network that enhances the urban environment and link community spaces for the enjoyment of residents, workers and tourists alike.

- The Heritage Trail setting will feature lush landscaping with open lawns, an expansive urban tree canopy that extends below the highway above. Softscape is maximized through six planting palettes that are designed for the range of site solar and hydrologic conditions, from “lush tropical” to “dry succulents”. Amenities along the trail include seat walls and benches, signage and wayfinding, pathways of varying surfaces, and attractive lighting, all adapted to Miami’s **CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT**.
- This iconic project is essential for urban revitalization in a central and rapidly developing area of Miami. It will serve as a legacy to all communities who contributed to the creation of Miami, and it will stimulate dynamic **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**, creating new jobs, supporting local businesses, and expanding the tax base for the residents of Overtown and Miami.

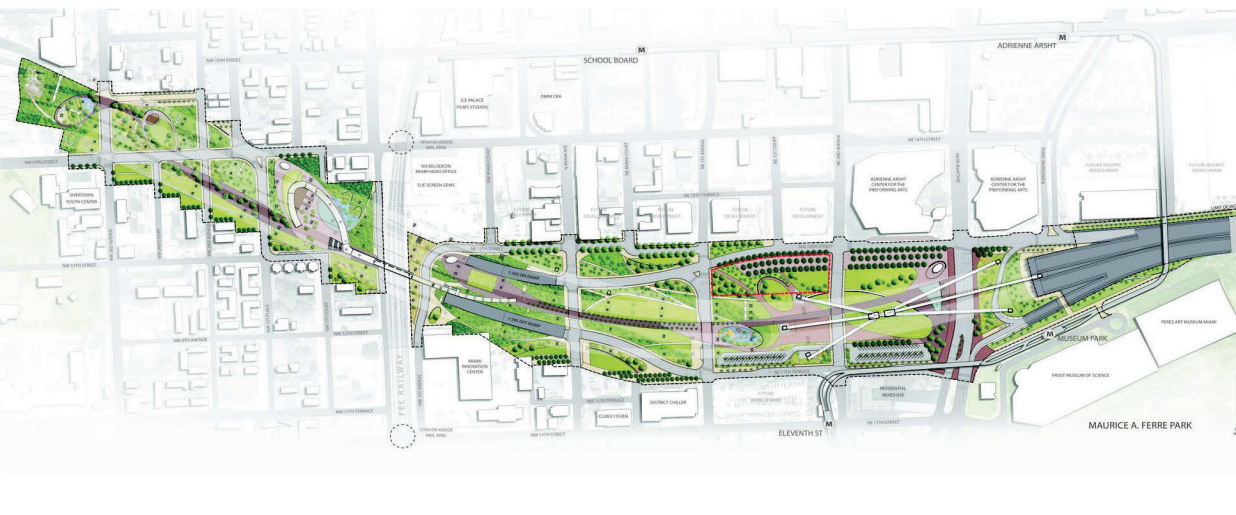
## PLAN VIEW OF THE UNDERDECK

1 MILE

GIBSON PARK

FEC RAILWAY

BISCAYNE BAY



## I-395 UNDERDECK IMPROVEMENT



### UNDERDECK VISION

The I-395 Underdeck & Heritage Trail is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restitch neighborhoods divided by highway construction in the 1960s, reinvigorating Miami’s urban fabric through the transformation of a long-standing barrier into a signature open space. The project will be a richly planted, cohesive, and world-class destination and transportation corridor that will reconnect communities. The I-395 Underdeck will welcome visitors of all ages and abilities, turning a highway that divides into a vibrant and green community asset, and driving renewed economic vitality and quality of life for all.