

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Commissioner David Suarez

DATE: February 26, 2025

TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CONVERSION OF 7605 COLLINS AVENUE INTO A MARINE SCIENCE EDUCATION CENTER AND MUSEUM.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

N/A

ANALYSIS

Please place on the February 26, 2025 agenda a referral to the Land Use and Sustainability Committee (the “Committee”) to discuss the possible conversion of 7605 Collins Avenue into a Marine Science Education Center and Museum.

ANALYSIS

Optimal Use for 7605 Collins Avenue:

The City of Miami Beach acquired 7605 Collins Avenue in 2024, funded by the Building Department, with the intent to establish a satellite office for their operations in North Beach. However, the property's unique location—adjacent to a park, library, and children’s playground—provides an opportunity to maximize its use for the community. Transforming the property into a Marine Science Education Center & Museum would better align with the surrounding area's character and offer long-term cultural, educational, and environmental benefits.

Key Points:

1. Location and Context:

- 7605 Collins Avenue is an oceanfront property situated in a neighborhood characterized by recreational and educational spaces, such as parks, a library, and a playground.
- An office building for the Building Department is inconsistent with the surrounding area's usage and fails to capitalize on the location’s potential to serve as a community hub.

2. Proposed Use: Marine Science Education Center and Museum:

- A Marine Science Education Center would integrate seamlessly with the neighborhood, complementing the existing park, library, and playground.
- The center could serve multiple purposes:
 - o Offer after-school and Pre-K programs focused on marine conservation and education.
 - o Act as a base for organizations like the Surfrider Foundation’s Blue Water Task Force.
 - o Host beach cleanups, workshops, and cultural events to foster environmental stewardship.
 - o Create an interactive museum featuring marine ecosystems, local biodiversity, and hands-on exhibits to attract residents and tourists alike.
- Activations could extend to the surrounding area and beach, providing outdoor educational

experiences.

- This use would serve a diverse demographic, maximizing the property's public benefit.

3. Economic and Cultural Impact:

- An oceanfront Marine Science Education Center would enhance North Beach's cultural offerings, attracting visitors and generating economic activity.
- Programs and events hosted at the center would engage the local community, fostering environmental awareness and civic pride.
- The facility could secure external funding and partnerships with environmental organizations, reducing the financial burden on the City.

4. Alternative Ocean Rescue Use:

- An Ocean Rescue substation was proposed as another potential use, but is already funded and planned under the 2018 G.O. Bond. Allocating this property for the substation would duplicate those efforts.

5. Challenges:

- Repurposing the property for a Marine Science Education Center would require the City to identify alternative solutions for the Building Department's satellite office needs, potentially extending the lease at the current Normandy Drive location.
- Legal considerations around the use of proprietary funds from the Building Department for the purchase would need to be addressed, potentially requiring reallocation of City funds to reimburse the department.

Recommendation:

Given the property's prime oceanfront location, its proximity to community-focused amenities, and the limited public benefit of a governmental office space, 7605 Collins Avenue should be repurposed as a Marine Science Education Center and Museum. This transformation aligns with the City's commitment to fostering educational, environmental, and cultural growth while providing a lasting impact on the community.

Suggested next steps:

- Negotiate with the Building Department to allocate alternative funds for the property's purchase and redevelopment.
- Develop partnerships with environmental and educational organizations to support the Marine Science Education Center.
- Extend the Building Department's lease at Normandy Drive or identify another suitable location for their operations.

This proposal ensures the property serves the greatest number of people, fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship while aligning with the City's broader vision for North Beach.

The Administration should be prepared to address the suggested next steps and to provide any additional information that could be relevant to the Committee in formulating its recommendation to the City Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

A fiscal impact analysis will be provided once the Commission makes a determination on the best use for the city-owned property.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

N/A

Applicable Area

North Beach

**Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item,
pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

Yes

**Is this item related to a G.O. Bond
Project?**

No

**Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481,
includes a principal engaged in lobbying?** No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s): N/A

Department

Office of Commissioner David Suarez

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner David Suarez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Ref: LUSC - Convert 7605 Collins Ave into Marine Science Education Center and Museum.
(Suarez)

Previous Action (For City Clerk Use Only)