

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Commissioner Alex Fernandez

DATE: February 3, 2025

TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS IN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY (RS) DISTRICTS, TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE CHARACTER OF THE CITY'S SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS.

RECOMMENDATION

I would like the Land Use and Sustainability Committee ("LUSC") to discuss potential enhancements specific to the Land Development Regulations for new single-family homes. Although we currently have incentives in place for the retention of existing, architecturally significant single-family homes, these incentives unfortunately are not sufficient. As a result, we are losing historic and architecturally significant homes to demolition. This trend is detrimental to the character of our single-family neighborhoods, as new construction often doesn't align with the historical context or the architectural identity of the area. I believe greater consideration should be given to the scale, massing and height of new homes, particularly in relation to the established context of the neighborhood. Additionally, the City's wide range of architectural styles are what make our neighborhoods so special.

To this end, I would like the Administration to develop potential options for the LUSC to discuss, which may include the following:

1. To encourage lower building heights, creating an option for increases in maximum unit size and lot coverage.
2. Expanding setback requirements for portions of the upper levels of single-family homes.
3. Enhancing and expanding the requirements for mandatory design elements along the side and front portions of understory areas.
4. Establishing additional, minimum landscape buffer requirements along interior sides of properties.
5. Review and strengthen the criteria for the demolition of single-family homes, where permissible under State law.
6. To address the lack of diversity in the design of newly constructed homes, establish design guidelines for the City's most emblematic architecture styles, to promote the highest caliber of architectural design. For example, some cities have adopted specific design patterns and construction guidelines that reflect their unique culture or historic significance, such as incorporating elements of local materials, distinctive stylistic features (e.g., rounded corners, glass blocks, red-tiled roofs, or stucco finishes) and traditional construction methods, while still allowing for modern innovation and sustainability. These guidelines are intended to help property owners and others understand the special features and characteristics of Miami Beach's historic neighborhoods and incorporate that understanding into designs for new construction.

After the LUSC discusses and transmits a recommendation on these, and other potential options, I intend to sponsor a subsequent referral of Land Development Regulation amendments to the Planning Board.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

ANALYSIS

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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

CONCLUSION

Applicable Area

Citywide

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):

Department

Office of Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Condensed Title

Ref: LUSC - Enhancements to Development Regs in Residential Single-Family Districts.
(Fernandez/Bhatt)

Previous Action (For City Clerk Use Only)