

2024 **LEGISLATIVE RECAP**

Commissioner Alex Fernandez





ALEX J. FERNANDEZ
COMMISSIONER

January 2025

Dear Neighbors:

As we start a beautiful new year, I am proud to share this 2024 Legislative Recap with you, summarizing some of the legislation I have worked on over the past year with the support of my amazing colleagues - a testament to the progress we've achieved together for Miami Beach.

This past year, we've made Spring Break safer, fought against casinos, saved the Art Deco Historic District from state preemptions that would have facilitated their demolition, saved the South Shore Community Center, repealed FAR incentives that encouraged hotel overdevelopment, and passed protections for the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.

We've advanced in our efforts to address homelessness, led to protect the housing of vulnerable tenants, invested in water quality improvements, launched the new Mount Sinai Link service to restore the 115 bus route, secured funding to continue the North Beach FreeBee On-Demand service, and advanced on the planning and design for new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

We've secured funding for artistic events, senior programs, public safety efforts, and LGBTQ initiatives while progressing infrastructure projects to address flooding and sea level rise.

The legislative accomplishments I have made in 2024 is thanks to collegial teamwork and the support of Mayor Steven Meiner and my fellow City Commissioners. It reflects not only our shared vision for a cleaner, safer, more resilient, and beautiful Miami Beach but also the power of unity. And, in the spirit of unity, this new year presents the opportunity to build upon the bond of our community, promote kindness, and cultivate the warmth between neighbors that make Miami Beach truly special.

One of our neighbors, Susan Rosler, shared a beautiful poem with me this holiday season, which perfectly captures the call to live in harmony, spread kindness, and be a force for good within the community:

*"To keep the peace, you'll wonder how
Focus only on the amazing NOW.
Let grace, glory, & glamour shine
For others to imitate & achieve the divine.
Giving, loving, & happiness bring
Forever gratitude, the ultimate thing."*

As we move into 2025, I am inspired by the work we've done together and filled with hope for what lies ahead as we work for a stronger, more connected community.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you. I am honored by your trust and look forward to building upon our momentum in this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex J. Fernandez".

Alex J. Fernandez, Commissioner
City of Miami Beach



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COMMISSIONER

Definition of “Me” and “I” in This Report

In this report, any reference to “me” or “I” reflects teamwork, and the collective efforts of individuals dedicated to serving the residents of Miami Beach. These accomplishments are the result of collaboration with:

- **YOU, our residents and stakeholders**, who share ideas, concerns, and aspirations, inspiring meaningful policies and initiatives that benefit our community.
- **My Senior Aide, Monica Matteo-Salinas and my Legislative Aide, Kara Petrella**, who work tirelessly to help brainstorm, refine, and deliver results for the public. Their dedication and creativity are instrumental in transforming ideas into impactful outcomes. We truly try our best to responsibly assist everyone who contacts our office. **I am also grateful to Mark Herskowitz**, a Miami Beach resident who volunteers his time, providing an outsider’s perspective and serving as a valuable sounding board to our office’s efforts.
- **Our City Manager Eric Carpenter and City Attorney Ric Dopico**, who guide the journey from policy conception to legislation and implementation, ensuring that our actions deliver tangible results for our residents.
- **Our Mayor Steven Meiner and City Commission**, whose support is essential in advancing any initiative. I am honored to work alongside such a dedicated group of elected public servants, each bringing passion, love, and commitment to our beautiful city.

This report is not about the work of one individual but the shared achievements of a community working together with purpose and vision. Each success is a testament to what we can accomplish when we collaborate as neighbors and leaders, united in service to Miami Beach.





ALEX J. FERNANDEZ
COMMISSIONER

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Policy

Ad-Hoc Historic Preservation Ordinance Advisory Committee

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, originally adopted in 1982, has undergone multiple amendments over the past four decades to address the evolving needs of historic preservation. Currently, the ordinance is housed within Chapter 2, Article XIII of the Resiliency Code and covers a broad spectrum of regulations, including guidelines for the Historic Preservation Board review of projects, the maintenance and preservation of designated properties, demolition by neglect, the issuance of certificates of appropriateness, and the process for historic designation.

In response to growing concerns about potential state preemption, I sponsored the creation of the Ad-Hoc Historic Preservation Ordinance Advisory Committee ("Committee") to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of these historic preservation regulations. This review focused on strengthening and safeguarding the city's preservation efforts, ensuring that they remain robust and enforceable in the face of changing legal landscapes.

After a series of highly productive public meetings, the Committee unanimously approved its Final Report and Recommendations in October 2024. I am working with our Planning Department and the City Attorney's Office to introduce legislation to advance the implementation of these recommendations throughout 2025. Below is a summary of the key recommendations in the Committee's report:

1. **Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Criteria:** The Committee recommended streamlining COA criteria by reducing redundancy, updating outdated guidelines, and clarifying the use of the Secretary of Interior's Standards. They also suggested expanding administrative authority for COA reviews to include certain minor projects.
2. **Review Process Streamlining:** Recommendations include expanding administrative COA review to cover minor alterations, refining the two-step approval process, and adjusting transportation analysis requirements for larger projects.
3. **Incentives for Historic Preservation:** The Committee suggested expanding property tax exemptions to include multi-family and commercial buildings, exploring Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and improving single-family home zoning incentives. They also proposed financial incentives like fee waivers and grants to encourage renovations in certain areas.
4. **Additional Recommendations:** The Committee recommended adding staff to support the city's growing preservation workload.

I want to thank the community members who dedicated their time and expertise to serving on this taskforce:

- Ricardo Lopez, Chair
- Michael Goldberg, Vice Chair
- Alex Witkoff
- Andrew Halloran
- Scott Needelman
- Daniel Ciraldo
- Javier Granda

Advancing the Bayshore Traffic Calming Project

Early this year, I sponsored a resolution to advance a critical traffic calming project in the Central Bayshore neighborhood. The project includes the installation of various traffic calming devices, including traffic circles and speed tables, essential for reducing vehicle speeds and cut-through traffic, and enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety in this residential area.

Addressing Homelessness

Over the past few years, I have sponsored and advocated for a series of comprehensive measures designed to address homelessness in Miami Beach. These initiatives range from expanding shelter capacity to implementing data-driven outreach strategies, with a focus on both immediate assistance and long-term solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness. Below are key highlights of these efforts:



Homelessness Metrics and Reporting (May 2024)

- I introduced a resolution that directed the Administration to regularly publish metrics related to homelessness, including shelter bed availability and the number of individuals arrested under the City's camping ordinance, ensuring transparency and data-driven decisions.

Proactive Homeless Outreach and Enforcement (May 2024)

- In May, I sponsored a resolution that directs the Police Department and the Office of Housing and Community Services to conduct proactive, weekly outreach efforts, ensuring that individuals experiencing homelessness are offered essential services throughout Miami Beach. The resolution also strengthened enforcement of the City's camping ordinance, mandating the Police Department to offer immediate shelter to those in violation. If shelter is declined, the camping ordinance will be enforced accordingly. This collaborative and compassionate approach was designed to prioritize the safety and dignity of homeless individuals while maintaining the well-being of our entire community. I would like to thank Commissioners Magazine and Suarez for co-sponsoring this important initiative.

Amended Shelter Bed Contracts for Persons Experiencing Homelessness (July 2024)

- To address the need for shelter beds, I sponsored a resolution approving an amendment to the agreement between the City of Miami Beach and the Salvation Army, increasing the number of emergency shelter beds available for individuals experiencing homelessness. The amendment allocates additional funding to purchase four more beds, bringing the total to 33 beds, including options for after-hours placements and family rooms. This expansion is critical to meeting the rising demand for shelter services, and the amendment also authorizes the City Manager to add further beds as needed, subject to budget availability.

After-Hours Live Assistance for Homeless Outreach Services (September 2024)

- Public safety and addressing homelessness are top priorities for me, which is why I sponsored a proposal to extend the hours of operation for homeless outreach services

and introduce live assistance after hours, filling a crucial gap in our support system. Previously, the Homeless Outreach Services Team only operated during regular business hours, with limited extended coverage on select days. This new initiative ensures a continuous, reliable channel for the public to report and address homelessness, providing essential support at all times. By improving phone coverage and adding live assistance, we enhance our response capabilities and gather crucial data to better serve our community. As of October 1st, the public can reach homeless assistance at 305-604-4663. I am grateful for the support of Mayor Meiner and Commissioner Magazine in co-sponsoring this initiative.

Approved Grants with Camillus House, Favela Miami Corp., Lotus House and New Hope C.O.R.P.S. (October – December 2024)

- Approved a \$100,000 allocation for Favela Miami Corp. to continue providing homeless employment services during FY 2025, aimed at increasing job access and retention for homeless individuals.
- Approved \$125,000 for additional emergency shelter beds for homeless individuals through a contract with the Lotus House Shelter.
- Approved an amendment to the Camillus House agreement to expand shelter bed services for homeless individuals, allowing for advance payments and flexible contract terms based on need.
- Approved \$568,000 for New Hope C.O.R.P.S. to continue providing essential services, including street outreach, detox, treatment, and recovery, to the City's unsheltered population.

All this builds upon the efforts that I've focused on since being elected, including:

Specialized Medical Outreach for Homeless (July 2023)

- Approved reallocating funds to support a pilot program providing specialized medical outreach services for homeless individuals, managed by Camillus Health Concern, Inc.

Additional Staffing (April 2023)

- Approved an enhancement to allow for the conversion of 2 existing budgeted part-time caseworker positions into full-time positions and 2 additional full-time positions—forming an extended outreach services team to provide additional support to routine operations on Thursdays and Fridays and outreach and engagement on Saturdays and Sundays. In June 2023, the team commenced the extended schedule.

Alcohol Sale Regulations

Alton Road, West Avenue, and Belle Isle

This year, I sponsored two key pieces of legislation focused on improving public safety and quality of life for residents by regulating alcohol sales in certain neighborhoods. The first ordinance proposes uniform restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol in Belle Isle, setting a termination time of 2:00 a.m. indoors and 12:00 a.m. outdoors for eligible establishments. This initiative addresses concerns about noise and disruptions to residents, enhancing the overall living experience. Similarly, the second ordinance introduces alike restrictions along West Avenue and Alton Road, to reduce noise disturbances and police calls by limiting alcohol service hours at local venues. Both measures are designed to balance the needs of businesses with the well-being of the community, promoting a safer, quieter environment for residents while maintaining a vibrant public space.

RM3 Oceanfront Properties

Recognizing that the outdoor sale of alcohol on oceanfront properties in the RM3 zoning district is incompatible with adjacent residential uses along the Collins Avenue corridor, I sponsored an ordinance to restrict outdoor alcohol sales until midnight for businesses located on the east side of Collins Avenue between 53rd and 72nd Street. This rule applies to both existing establishments and new businesses, while indoor alcohol sales remain unaffected. I appreciate Commissioner Bhatt's collaboration as co-sponsor of this ordinance.

Area Managers for South, Mid, and North Beach

In the FY 2025 budget, I successfully secured funding for the creation of three Area Manager positions, which will be tasked with overseeing specific geographic districts in the city. These positions are designed to be proactive, serving as the first line of response to community needs by identifying, reporting, and addressing issues—whether related to cleanliness, safety, or other concerns—before they become visible to residents. The goal is to eliminate the need for residents to file complaints, ensuring that the city remains ahead of potential problems. With dedicated Area Managers on the ground, we will improve the City's responsiveness and maintain a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant environment for all. I look forward to seeing these positions filled in early 2025, with the new Area Managers playing a vital role in keeping our city running smoothly.

Relatedly, I also sponsored an item to restructure the role of Code Compliance Administrator and now designate them as Code Compliance Area Captains, reflecting a more localized and proactive approach to oversee compliance within specific areas. The update to the roles and responsibilities of this position will forge a stronger bond with residents and businesses in the area and will be in a better position to address area-specific concerns. This requires an amendment to the Code Compliance Administrator job description, which is currently under revision.

Assisting Displaced Residents at the Riviera Plaza Apartments

Following the approval of the Riviera Plaza Apartments conversion to a boutique hotel, I sponsored a resolution and led efforts to urge the landlords to extend the move-out deadline for tenants that were being displaced. In addition to extending the move-out period, the landlords agreed to provide financial relief for relocation assistance to each resident, acknowledging the significant challenges of relocation and associated expenses. I am grateful to our State Senator, Ileana Garcia, for her caring and compassionate efforts to help the tenants find new housing.

Authorizing Participation in Stateside Mutual Aid for Emergency Assistance

In May, I sponsored and passed a resolution authorizing the City of Miami Beach to enter into the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement, which allows for reciprocal emergency assistance between the State of Florida, local governments, and the city. In the event of a disaster or emergency, this agreement ensures that Miami Beach can both request and provide vital aid to other municipalities while receiving reimbursement for any resources deployed. This collaboration enhances our ability to respond to natural, technological, or civil emergencies, strengthening the City's preparedness and resilience in the face of potential disasters.

CitiBike: Free Resident Benefit

Starting January 1, 2025, Miami Beach residents will have access to exciting new benefits through Deco Bike's self-service bicycle-sharing program, which I advocated during the approval process. Under this new initiative, Deco Bike will provide three free 30-minute rides per month to residents who are not Citi Bike members, or one free month of membership for every 12 months of continuous membership for established customers. This "Monthly Incentive Program" is designed

to encourage more residents to use bicycles as a convenient, sustainable transportation alternative. It's a step forward in supporting eco-friendly commuting options, reducing traffic congestion, and promoting healthier lifestyles in our community.

Collins Avenue Multimodal Corridor: 41 Street to 63 Street

In 2024, we made progress on an item I had sponsored in 2023 to improve the safety and multimodal mobility of Collins Avenue in Mid-Beach. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) conducted a comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Study, resulting in the recommendation



to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility, including the implementation of a two-way protected bicycle path on the west side of Indian Creek Drive adjacent to the waterway as well as additional pedestrian crosswalks. The project is currently in the planning phase and will undergo further design refinement in collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure the corridor meets the community's needs. The construction phase of this project has not yet been funded or programmed. The City is working with FDOT to advance the project construction while avoiding overlaps with the future construction of the Alton Road

corridor in Mid-Beach to minimize the impact on mobility and quality-of-life.

Completing Connectivity on the Indian Creek Pedestrian Pathway

I sponsored a resolution to complete the Indian Creek Pedestrian Pathway near the 28th Street pedestrian bridge. The resolution authorizes the City of Miami Beach to prioritize funding during the 2025 budget process for a feasibility study to develop a walkway over water in sections of the Indian Creek Pedestrian Pathway that are currently not connected. This includes unconnected segments near 28th Street, 31st to 35th Streets, and 37th to 39th Streets. The study, estimated to cost \$100,000, will assess design and construction costs, with the goal of securing the necessary property rights or consents to complete the continuous pedestrian pathway.



The City is also authorized to negotiate with the owner of the 2811 Indian Creek Drive outlot to secure an easement or other property rights for the pathway's development. If negotiations fail, the City may pursue eminent domain to acquire the necessary rights. This project, which follows

previous actions for seawall construction and easements along Indian Creek Drive, aims to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity while preserving the area's natural beauty. The resolution responds to requests from the Mid Beach Neighborhood Association for improved pedestrian access and will proceed to design and construction upon completion of the feasibility study, subject to funding approval.

Consider Designating the Jackie Gleason Theatre as Historic

I proudly sponsored a resolution to initiate the historic designation process for The Fillmore Miami Beach at Jackie Gleason Theater, a beloved landmark located at 1700 Washington Avenue. Opened in 1950 as the Miami Beach Auditorium, this iconic venue has played a pivotal role in Miami Beach's cultural history, hosting legendary performances and events for over seven decades. With its unique architectural design and historical significance, the Fillmore Theater is a vital part of our city's identity. By moving forward with requesting the Historic Preservation Board to consider this historic designation, we are ensuring that this cherished site will be preserved for future generations, protecting its legacy as a cornerstone of Miami Beach's rich cultural heritage.

Display of QR Code Decal for Conditional Use Permit

This ordinance enhances transparency and accountability for businesses operating under a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), particularly those that could have a significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood. This ordinance requires Neighborhood Impact Establishments—such as nightclubs, bars, event venues, live entertainment businesses, and certain restaurants with late hours or outdoor seating—to display a decal issued by the City. The decal will include a link or QR code that allows residents and visitors to access the full text of the approved CUP. This initiative is designed to ensure these businesses adhere to their CUP conditions, reducing the potential for disruptions like noise and safety conditions, and empowering residents as well as Code Enforcement Officers with clear, accessible information about conditions regulating the businesses operating in our community. This effort aims to protect the quality of life for residents while promoting responsible business operations in Miami Beach.

Dual Turning Lane: Collins Avenue towards 41 Street



In 2023, I introduced legislation urging the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT) to expedite the dual southbound right turn lanes at the intersection of Indian Creek Drive/41 Street, to alleviate chronic traffic gridlock at this major intersection. In 2024, the design of this project was completed, and I am excited that construction is anticipated to commence this summer, 2025. The goal of this project is to increase vehicular capacity along southbound Indian Creek Drive and reduce traffic congestion approaching the 41 Street intersection.

The project includes widening Indian Creek Drive from 44 Street to 41 Street to accommodate an additional southbound right turn lane at the intersection of Indian Creek Drive to westbound 41 Street, thereby creating dual southbound right turn lanes, and pedestrian safety improvements

including a new signalized crosswalk across Indian Creek Drive at 41 Street. FDOT will provide a detailed construction schedule once a contractor has been selected and conduct community outreach prior to commencing construction.

Electric Vehicle Charging Requirements

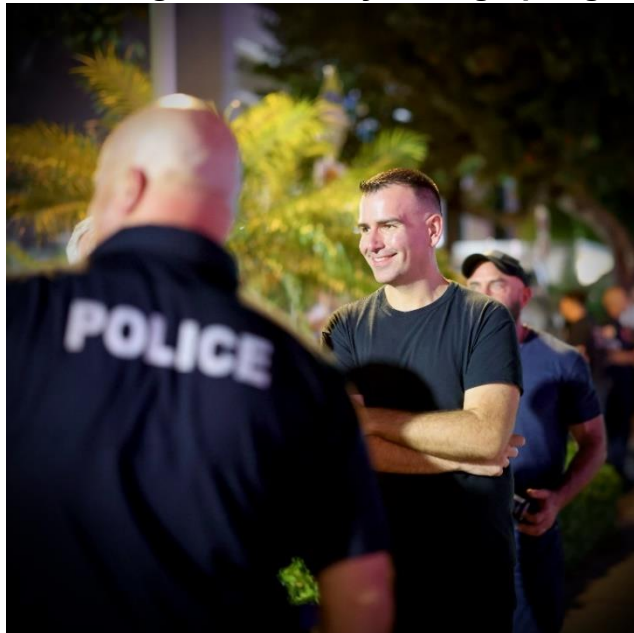
I sponsored this ordinance to support sustainability and the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in Miami Beach. The ordinance mandates that new developments allocate at least 10% of parking spaces for Level 2 chargers, with provisions for future installations. Additionally, it requires the installation of fast Level 3 chargers in commercial, hotel, and residential buildings, ensuring public access and promoting greener infrastructure throughout the city. This initiative is a key step towards making Miami Beach a more sustainable and EV-friendly community

Enhancing Ocean Drive with Lighting

As part of my continued efforts to improve our iconic public spaces, I sponsored and successfully passed a resolution to allocate \$428,000 in one-time funding for lighting improvements on the west side of Ocean Drive. As one of Miami Beach's most iconic streets, Ocean Drive plays a central role in our community's identity, and these improvements will enhance both public safety and aesthetic appeal.

Approved as part of the FY 2025 budget, this initiative improves visibility along Ocean Drive while reinforcing our city's reputation as a top destination for residents and visitors alike. The installation of the new lighting system was completed in December 2024.

Enhancing Public Safety During Spring Break: 2024 and 2025



Breaking up with Spring Break 2024

In 2023, following a series of tragic incidents, including 16 stampedes and 33 shootings since 2012, I pledged to take bold action to protect our community. In a March 2023 email, I called for a proactive approach to "shut the door on Spring Break" and pushed for stronger public safety measures. This commitment led to key legislative actions in 2023 and 2024.

Spring Break 2024 marked a major improvement in public safety for Miami Beach, thanks to the dedication of our law enforcement officers including the Miami Beach Police Department, Code Compliance, Parking Enforcement, and Fire Rescue. We saw remarkable results: no stampedes, no shootings, and no fatalities. Felony arrests

dropped by 19% compared to last year, and overall arrests decreased by 8% during March.

In keeping with the commitment I have made to you, some of the Spring Break 2024 measures I've sponsored include:

- Proactively endorsing a curfew for Spring Break 2024 and Notifying Businesses since last year ([Resolution 2023-32557](#)) ([Letter we sent to businesses in preparation](#))

- Defunding 2024 Spring Break Special Event Programming and Redirect those funds, up to \$3 Million, for Additional Public Safety for Spring Break 2024 ([Resolution 2023-32671](#))
- Proposing to increase the non-resident Spring Break parking rate to \$100 ([Idea introduced at the September 13, 2023 City Commission meeting](#))
- Reaffirming Endorsing Curfew for Spring Break 2024 and Directing the City Manager to Implementing a Robust Communication Strategy ([Resolution 2024-32899](#))
- Implementing Double Towing Fees for Spring Break 2024 and establishing Traffic Special Event Zones as allowed by Florida State Statutes ([Resolution 2024-32908](#))
- Amending the High Impact Parking Ordinance to establish the \$100 parking rate for Spring Break ([Ordinance 2024-4598](#))

These actions, combined with a robust communication strategy, fueled the success of the "Break Up with Spring Break" campaign, which quickly gained widespread support. Additionally, with the collaboration of the City Administration, I worked with Uber to ensure safety messaging reached both drivers and riders through push notifications and in-app messages, helping prevent bad actors from turning to rideshare platforms due to garage closures. Together, with the bold leadership of Mayor Meiner on this front, these measures contributed to one of the safest Spring Breaks in recent years. This outcome is a testament to the power of proactive leadership and our community's commitment to a safer Miami Beach. As I said at the end of Spring Break, and I'll say it again: what a difference! This success lays a strong foundation for future improvements, and I look forward to building on this momentum in the years ahead.

Preparing for Spring Break 2025

The City Commission adopted a comprehensive strategy for this year, sponsored by Mayor Meiner and me, building upon the improved public safety initiatives from the year prior. Our proactive plan will address the challenges posed by large crowds and violence, ensuring the safety of both residents and visitors. Key measures include enhanced law enforcement staffing through local and state police partnerships, a strict enforcement of the "Open Container" law, and proactively endorsing the use of curfews, beach closures at 6:00 p.m., and potential sidewalk café suspensions on Ocean Drive. Additionally, the City will continue to explore a secured perimeter on Ocean Drive, implement midnight curfews if necessary, and adjust parking policies—closing City-owned lots, increasing parking fees, and restricting on-street parking. Efforts also include increased noise enforcement, fire code inspections, and a robust communications campaign to keep the public informed about possible restrictions. These actions, combined with collaboration with rideshare services like Uber and Lyft, are part of the City's ongoing commitment to creating a safer, more controlled environment during the high-impact Spring Break period.



Enhancing “Residents’ Right to Know”

This year, I sponsored an important amendment to the City Code to enhance resident engagement and transparency in local government. The amendment to the "Residents' Right to Know" policy broadens the scope of issues that require targeted neighborhood notice for agenda items involving the planned closure of City streets, bridges, or parks. This update promotes greater community involvement and ensures that all Miami Beach residents can stay informed and have a voice in shaping decisions that affect our neighborhoods.



Expanding the Caregiver Parking Program

In July, I helped to expand the City’s Caregiver Parking Permit Program to better support our senior residents and their caregivers. Previously limited to those in restricted residential parking zones or senior housing, the expansion now allows all senior residents, regardless of their location, to benefit from the program. Caregivers will be able to park in any on-street metered parking space or city lot, with discounted resident parking rates (currently \$1.00 per hour and subject to Consumer Price Index increases), making it easier for them to provide essential services. This update ensures more convenient and accessible parking options for both seniors and their caregivers across the city.

Extending the Building Permit Reprieve Program

This ordinance extends the Building Permit Reprieve Program in Miami Beach to provide property owners, including those with single-family, multi-family, mixed-use, or commercial properties, an opportunity to bring their property into compliance with the Florida Building Code. This extension, which runs through December 31, 2026, offers relief to property owners who have either failed to obtain a permit or whose permits have expired without a final inspection or permit close-out.

The program aims to address the common issue of unpermitted work, which can pose safety risks and create financial burdens, especially when properties change ownership. It helps avoid double or triple permit fees for new owners who may be unaware of prior violations. The reprieve program allows property owners the time and opportunity to resolve permitting issues without incurring excessive costs, ensuring compliance with safety standards and building codes.

FAR Exception for Gender Neutral Restrooms

To promote inclusivity and accessibility in our community, I sponsored an ordinance to amend the Land Development Regulations to create an exception to the definition of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for gender-neutral restrooms. This change encourages the creation of inclusive and accessible facilities that accommodate all individuals, including those with special needs, families, elderly individuals with caregivers, and transgender or gender nonconforming people. In addition, by exempting these restrooms from FAR calculations, the ordinance allows for more efficient use of building space as well as fostering a safer and more equitable environment for everyone.

FAR Process that Places Residents First

In response to the State's preemption of our voter referendum requirement for FAR increases, my ordinance strengthened transparency and community involvement in the process of increasing FAR. It outlines a clear, multi-step procedure for FAR increases, which includes multiple public hearings, community outreach, and workshops to gather input from affected residents. The process ensures that all stakeholders, including neighborhood associations, are notified and have opportunities to speak up. By codifying these procedures, the city is ensuring that residents are informed and their voices are heard, providing an accountable and transparent method for future development decisions that may impact their neighborhoods.

My ordinance established a requirement for comprehensive studies, including massing studies to visualize the impact of proposed FAR increases on building volume and location, as well as an infrastructure analysis to evaluate potential effects on traffic, mobility, parking, water, sewer, resiliency, and public spaces. Furthermore, my legislation limits the City Commission's ability to sponsor FAR increases for individual property owners, requiring them to file private applications.

Fee Waiver of Miami Fleet Week

I proudly sponsored legislation to waive special events and city service fees for the Fleet Week Miami 2024 "Miami Beach Top Gun Beach Olympics." This event, organized by Broward Navy Days, Inc., took place on May 11, 2024, at Lummus Park between 8th and 9th Streets. The event featured fitness competitions for military personnel as part of Fleet Week, a week-long celebration of the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, bringing over 800 service members to South Florida.



Flood Mitigation: Critical Needs Projects

Below is an updated overview of critical needs projects we reviewed at the Land Use and Sustainability Committee this year, which are currently in the design phase, nearing commencement of design, or scheduled for construction:

- Nautilus – Northwest (Design: currently at 60%, Construction: 2026)
- Nautilus – Muss Park/44th street (Design: currently at 30%, Construction: 2026)
- La Gorce – North Bay Road between 56th – 60th streets (Design: 2025, Construction: 2027)
- La Gorce – Area surrounding La Gorce park and intersects with North Bay Road (Design: 2025, Construction: 2027)
- La Gorce – North Bay Road between 50th – 52nd streets (Design: 2026, Construction: 2028)
- North Shore B and C - Dickens Avenue (Design: 2028, Construction: 2030)

Flood Mitigation: Neighborhood Improvement Projects

As Chair of the Land Use and Sustainability Committee, I convened two special meetings and led discussions to advance the First Street and West Avenue projects, and following these meetings, both projects received unanimous support from the City Commission. These projects are essential for tackling flooding and elevation challenges, while also upgrading our wastewater infrastructure and incorporating advanced stormwater treatment systems. Preserving the unique character of our neighborhoods is a top priority, and these projects will enhance pedestrian and cyclist experiences, as well as add greenery and trees to our communities. I also want to commend Commissioners Suarez Dominguez for their leadership in addressing residential parking concerns related to these initiatives.

First Street

The First Street Neighborhood Improvement Project is a crucial initiative aimed at addressing flooding issues and enhancing infrastructure in the South of Fifth neighborhood. Key decisions made include maintaining parallel parking along First Street instead of diagonal parking, ensuring additional parking options for residents, preserving and relocating existing oak trees, and continuing with the design of the stormwater system to optimize traffic flow. These improvements will help mitigate flooding while enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

West Avenue Phase II

The West Avenue Phase II Neighborhood Improvement Project will address critical infrastructure needs, including flooding, wastewater systems, and stormwater management, while also enhancing our streetscapes. To expedite the project and minimize disruptions, we've adopted a multi-segmented approach that will allow construction to proceed in phases, ensuring roadways are safe and drivable before moving to the next segment. This plan was developed with input from the West Avenue Neighborhood Association and will improve the overall quality of life for residents by upgrading vital infrastructure and enhancing public spaces in South Beach. Construction for this phase is anticipated to be completed in 2027.

West Avenue Phase III

This project includes the areas South of 14th Street that have been on hold due to issues related to improvements in the area North of 14th Street (Phase II). To minimize further delays, I sponsored legislation to prioritize completing the design of Phase III design documents in 2025 to expedite the implementation and completion of this critical project and continue efforts to enhance the resiliency of the neighborhood. Construction for this phase is anticipated to commence in 2026.



Funding for North Beach Senior Meals Program



I sponsored legislation to continue funding for the Senior Meals Program at the North Beach Senior Center, operated by UNIDAD of Miami Beach, with a commitment of \$230,000 per year through Fiscal Year 2029-2030. This recurring funding will support up to 180 seniors in North Beach, addressing food insecurity and, ensuring this vital service remains available to those in need. Additionally, any unused funds will be allocated for other elder programming at the Senior Center.

Housing Impact Statement

I have introduced a referral to the Planning Board for an ordinance mandating a "Housing Impact Statement" as part of every development application. This statement would analyze the impact of the proposed development on local housing availability, including whether the property has housed residents within the past year and if any of those units were affordable, Section 8, or workforce housing. It would also detail any voluntary mitigation measures offered by the developer to support affected residents. Although the housing impact statement would not currently be a deciding factor in development approvals, it would provide valuable insights to the Land Use Boards and City Commission when making decisions on planning, zoning, and land use policies. Additionally, the ordinance suggests amending the review criteria for applications before various boards, allowing them to consider housing impact in their decision-making, thereby aligning development approvals with broader goals of housing stability and affordability.

Housing Impact Notice to Tenants

As part of my efforts to improve transparency and protect tenants, I am sponsoring legislation that requires a "courtesy notice" be sent to residential tenants when development applications are being considered in their buildings. Currently, only property owners within 375 feet of a development site are notified, leaving tenants in the dark about potential housing impacts. My proposed ordinance ensures that tenants are informed in advance, giving them time to prepare for potential displacement and access any mitigation measures developers may offer. This legislation has been referred to the Planning Board for review and I look forward to continuing to work on it to protect our residents.

Housing Protection Ordinance

I have sponsored the "Housing Protection Ordinance," which was introduced, passed first reading, and is still under consideration. This ordinance aims to address the rising housing challenges in Miami Beach, specifically requiring landlords to provide at least 90 days' written notice to the city before implementing rent increases of 10% or more for tenants receiving certain City services. The purpose is to give the City an opportunity to offer support services to residents facing potential housing instability. While the ordinance has passed its first reading, I am actively working with stakeholders to make improvements to the measure to ensure it effectively protects vulnerable residents while balancing the needs of landlords.

Improving the City's Agenda System



Were you ever frustrated by how long it used to take to open agenda and agenda items on the City's website? It would take forever and it hurt transparency and resident participation. That is why for several years, I've been working with our City Clerk to modernize the agenda system and enhance public accessibility. Beginning in 2022, I spearheaded the implementation of a new agenda management system by sponsoring the issuance of Request for Proposals (RFP No. 2022-056-WG). This RFP was a pivotal step toward identifying and selecting a modern web solution to replace the City's outdated agenda system. The initiative aimed to improve performance, accessibility, and public engagement by automating the compilation and distribution of meeting information, including agenda packets, minutes, and meeting actions. In addition, I've

championed key enhancements such as faster public access to agendas and individual items, high-quality video streaming with indexing, and an e-comment feature that allows residents to provide feedback directly through the online agenda system.

This effort culminated in the issuance of Resolution No. 2022-32339, that I sponsored, which approved the implementation of the new system. In June 2024, we unveiled a new web system addressing longstanding frustrations among residents and staff and that have been praised for improving efficiency and accessibility. With the leadership of Commissioner Dominguez, we continue to work to improve the Residents Right to Know feature on the system.

Installing Welcome Sign for Nautilus Neighborhood

To celebrate and highlight its distinct character, I passed a resolution to install welcoming signage at the main entrances to the Nautilus neighborhood. This initiative aims to promote the neighborhood's rich heritage, encourage tourism, and foster a stronger sense of community. I will be working closely with the Administration on the design to ensure the signage accurately reflects the unique spirit of the Nautilus neighborhood.

Investing in Water Quality Improvements for Park View Island

Since being elected, I have made it a top priority to improve water quality in the Park View Island Canal and I am proud to have passed legislation prioritizing funding in the FY 2025 budget for improvements to address the water quality issues in the canal.

This resolution follows a comprehensive study led by Dr. Solo-Gabriele from the University of Miami, which I also sponsored. The study identified key factors affecting water quality, including above-ground cleanliness, stormwater, animal waste, and aging infrastructure. Despite efforts to address water quality on all fronts, elevated bacteria levels persist, and the "No Contact Advisory" remains at the canal's kayak launch.

The City has been addressing this from all fronts. Increased street sweeping, enhanced trash and pet waste receptacles, and more Code presence is taking place. I sponsored funding for essential sanitary sewer upgrades, many of which have already been completed, with additional improvements planned. Funding is earmarked for stormwater treatment to reduce litter from entering the canal, and canal evaluations are underway for dredging. These initiatives are part of a long-term plan to restore water quality, enhance public health, and protect our local environment in this beautiful waterway.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Park View Canal Water Quality. New study results are expected soon.

Mandatory Progress Report Requirements for Conditional Use Permits

To strengthen compliance with Conditional Use Permits (CUPs), I passed an ordinance requiring businesses to submit an annual letter to the Planning Board confirming adherence to all CUP conditions. My legislation further allows the Planning Board to pull the annual letter for further review of the business' adherence of the CUP. This measure improves oversight and accountability. Failure to submit the annual letter may lead to a violation of the CUP and subsequent Board action, including modification or revocation hearings. I appreciate Commissioner Bhatt co-sponsoring this ordinance.

Miami Beach Promenade (Drive): Feasibility Study/Master Plan

Since November 2022, I've been working with the City Administration and residents of the Mid-Beach Neighborhood Association (MBNA) to improve Miami Beach Drive between 24th and 29th Streets. I sponsored referrals to both the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee and Finance and Economic Resilience Committee to discuss improvements in landscaping, cleanliness, infrastructure repairs, and flooding concerns. After several meetings in 2023, the City landscaped the ends of Miami Beach Drive, with ongoing maintenance for plant replacement. The Finance Committee also discussed my item for a long-term master plan for infrastructure improvements, including storm drains, with funding to be considered in the 2024 budget.

In 2024, I advocated for and the City Commission approved \$500,000 for a Feasibility Study/Master Plan, to be developed with MBNA and the community. The plan will cover improvements to hardscape, drainage, lighting, signage, CCTV, and pavement, and will assess existing utilities like water and sewer for potential upgrades. The study will result in a comprehensive report with project cost estimates. A consultant has been selected, and the study is expected to begin in March 2025, lasting 6 to 8 months. The final master plan will be presented to the City Commission by December 2025 or January 2026, with funding for implementation requested in the FY26-27 budget cycle.

Mount Sinai Link Service: Bus Route 115

After the discontinuation of this route, I worked with the City's Transportation Department and County Commissioner Micky Steinberg to mitigate the loss of Route 115 by establishing the Mount Sinai Link Service, connecting North Beach to Mount Sinai, and 41st Street – providing similar service previously covered by Route 115. The Mount Sinai Link operates 7 days a week from 7AM – 8PM. I'm grateful to Commissioner Laura Domínguez for supporting this effort.



Furthermore, as part of the current fiscal year budget, I advocated to secure funding to continue the Freebee On-demand service in North Beach.

North Beach Code Compliance & Property Maintenance Biweekly Update



As part of my ongoing efforts to enhance transparency and ensure accountability in all neighborhoods, I sponsored a resolution this past year to provide regular updates on key issues affecting North Beach. The City Administration has started issuing bi-weekly Letters to the Commission (LTC), offering updates on code enforcement, property management activities, and the status of Special Magistrate cases involving North Beach properties and businesses.

Additionally, a representative from the Code Enforcement Department will appear every other month before the Land Use and Sustainability Committee, beginning in February 2025, to address ongoing concerns and new developments. This initiative will keep residents informed and foster the change we want to see to improve quality of life across the community.

North Beach Commercial Use Regulations

I sponsored the creation of the “North Beach Commercial Character Overlay,” to protect the character of North Beach by limiting the proliferation of nuisance businesses. It prohibits tobacco and vape dealers, pawn shops, souvenir shops, and other disruptive establishments north of 53rd Street. Additionally, it limits the number of convenience stores, liquor stores, tattoo studios, and similar businesses, ensuring the area's unique cultural and historical identity is preserved. Furthermore, the ordinance introduces specific regulations for massage therapy centers to enhance public safety, establish minimum requirements, and mitigate neighborhood impacts further safeguarding the community's well-being.

Opposing Casinos in Miami Beach

I sponsored and successfully passed a resolution urging the Florida Legislature to oppose [Senate Bill 1054](#), which sought to expand casino gambling in Florida by allowing existing operations to relocate within a 30-mile radius. Miami Beach has a longstanding policy against gambling, supported by voter-backed amendments and city ordinances. In addition to sponsoring the resolution, I personally traveled to Tallahassee to advocate against this bill, speaking directly with lawmakers to highlight the potential risks it posed to our city.

With the instrumental support of hedge fund CEO Ken Griffin and philanthropist Norman Braman, our city was able to defeat this harmful legislation, which would have undermined the character of our community. This resolution highlights the significant economic and social risks of gambling, ensuring Miami Beach remains a cultural and tourism destination, free from the expansion of gambling.

[Read](#) my Miami Herald Editorial opposing casinos in Miami Beach.

Palm View: Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are small, self-contained living spaces with their own kitchen and bathroom, located on the same property as a single-family home. They are commonly called granny flats or cottage houses. To enhance housing flexibility and provide families with an opportunity to generate additional income – especially those trying to age in place – this ordinance allows the long-term rental of ADUs to unrelated families in the Palm View Historic District, provided the primary dwelling is owner-occupied. It also increases the maximum size of ADUs to 600 square feet and permits their construction on smaller properties. This amendment aligns with the 2020 Palm View Neighborhood Study.

Additionally, I advanced separate legislation to simplify the approval process for ADUs in Miami Beach's local historic districts zoned for single-family homes. The ordinance proposes allowing administrative review of ADU applications, provided they do not involve demolition or significant alterations to historically important structures. This initiative aims to make housing more affordable, particularly for the workforce, while preserving historic integrity and ensuring compliance with existing development regulations.

Parking Payment Options

For years, it bothered me that parking apps in Miami Beach were different from those in nearby cities. I'm thrilled to share that we've solved that! Miami Beach now accepts PayByPhone alongside ParkMobile, making parking more convenient for residents and visitors. This addition covers 66 surface lots, on-street meters, and will soon include city-operated garages. With PayByPhone, users can pay for parking, get reminders, extend sessions, and receive receipts—all from their smartphones. This expansion is just another way we're improving the experience in Miami Beach and making parking easier for everyone.

Powerline Undergrounding

In partnership with Florida Power & Light (FPL), we are working to underground approximately 10 miles of power lines at no cost to residents, as part of FPL's Storm Protection Plan. This effort aims to reduce visual clutter, enhance reliability during storms, and modernize infrastructure. Over 50% of the city already benefits from underground power, but the remaining areas still rely on vulnerable overhead lines. My resolution directed city staff to collaborate with FPL on expedited undergrounding projects, improve permitting processes, and work with telecommunications providers to bury their infrastructure, potentially saving residents up to \$41 million in costs.

Pride Park Activation Days

I sponsored a resolution reducing the number of ticketed event days at Pride Park from 120 to 75 annually, while still allowing for free community events. This update was the result of collaboration with various City departments to ensure events are scheduled fairly and that public spaces are protected for residents to enjoy. It reflects our commitment to balancing the needs of special events with the well-being of our residents.

I want to recognize Mayor Meiner who initiated the discussion in 2023 to better activate Pride Park for the benefit of city residents, including implementing the initial cap on the total number of days each year that Pride Park may be used for events.

Private Parking Lot Signage

Throughout the years, I've heard from many residents who are confused about private parking lots that they mistakenly believed were public municipal lots. This confusion, especially when receiving citations from these private lots, has led to frustration as people often think they are being ticketed by the City. Private parking lots can have different rates, enforcement practices, and penalties compared to municipal lots, creating additional uncertainty.

I fully understand the frustration this causes, as having a vehicle towed is not only an inconvenience but can also be a significant financial burden, especially for parents with young children or individuals with disabilities. To address these concerns, I sponsored an ordinance requiring private parking lots to be clearly marked with prominent signage at all access points. This will make it easier for residents and visitors to distinguish private lots from City-owned parking facilities, ensuring they understand where to park, the rates, and who is issuing citations. This ordinance aims to eliminate confusion, improve clarity, and prevent unnecessary towing incidents. The new signage will be installed by early 2025.

Protecting the Art Deco Historic District from the Unsafe Structures Act



This year, like in 2023, I once again fought tirelessly in Tallahassee against [Senate Bill 1526](#), a harmful piece of legislation that threatened the preservation of historic buildings in Miami Beach and across Florida. The bill aimed to address unsafe structures but included broad language that could have jeopardized many of our historic buildings. Thanks to our efforts, the Art Deco District, one of the most iconic areas of our city, is not impacted—and we are certainly happy about that!

The bill would have allowed for the demolition of structures in these areas, labeling them as “nonconforming” simply because they did not meet new flood elevation requirements, putting many beloved landmarks in jeopardy. Together with the Miami Design Preservation League and the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, we successfully advocated for the protection of our historic architecture, ensuring that these invaluable assets in the Art Deco Historic District remain intact for generations to come. However, mid-Beach and North Beach are still significantly at risk.

Protecting Flamingo Park Track and Field

I successfully passed a resolution that will protect the track and field at Flamingo Park from being relocated or impacted by the construction of the new Fire Station No. 1. The City Administration has been directed to ensure the track remains in its current location and that construction plans are adjusted to prevent interruptions to its use. This resolution reflects my commitment to preserving public spaces and ensuring that our residents continue to have access to their recreational facilities. I appreciate Commissioners Dominguez and Magazine for co-sponsoring this resolution.

Protecting Residential Neighborhoods from Commercial Grade Parties

To protect the quality of life in residential neighborhoods, I sponsored a resolution requiring a special event permit for commercial-like parties and gatherings in single-family homes on Palm, Hibiscus, and Star Islands during Miami Art Week, 2025. The guidelines applied to events that involve significant vendors, services, or equipment, such as large commercial-grade speakers or fireworks, and may impact public safety, neighborhood traffic, and the residential character of the area. The permit process successfully mitigated these impacts by ensuring compliance with city regulations, involving city departments in the review and approval of such events, and allowing the City access to inspect the properties and shutdown parties that were not following the conditions of their permits.

Following the adoption of my resolution, the City encountered a legal challenge aimed at invalidating the recently passed measure. The plaintiffs claimed that the resolution violated their constitutional due process and First Amendment rights, as well as Florida state laws and the Miami Beach City Code. In response, the City Attorney's Office successfully removed the case to federal court and vigorously defended the resolution. I would like to extend my congratulations to our City Attorney's Office for their hard work and successful defense of this important resolution. Looking ahead, we are now focused on introducing broader policies that will address more areas of our city, and I am excited to continue advancing these efforts in 2025.

Purchase of Technology Equipment for Real-Time Crime Center

A couple of years ago, I made a motion to bifurcate the Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) from the broader Police Headquarters General Obligation Bond project to ensure a more efficient and focused implementation of this critical initiative. This year, I sponsored the technology component, which includes the integration of surveillance systems like video cameras, License Plate Readers, and drones. This will centralize surveillance and crime monitoring, enhancing the coordination and effectiveness of our Police Department's operations, improving real-time data streaming, and strengthening public safety across Miami Beach.

In February 2024, Commissioner Suarez sponsored a resolution directing the Police Department to develop a comprehensive plan for full-time staffing needs for the RTCC, including round-the-clock coverage. In June 2024, the City Commission approved the Administration's recommendation for a phased staffing approach. As of January 2025, two professional staff members have been hired with four additional positions in the hiring process.

Reform of Condominium Laws Post-Surfside

The City Commission passed my resolution urging the Florida Legislature to reform condominium regulations to ease financial pressures on condo owners. The resolution proposes raising the building height threshold for required structural integrity reserve studies, limiting the scope of these studies to structural issues, extending the timeline for associations to accumulate reserves, and requiring at least three quotes for services. It also calls for increased state oversight of

condominium associations and repealing preemptions to allow local governments more regulatory authority. These changes aim to reduce the financial burden on owners, especially seniors, while ensuring safety and accountability.

Relocation of South Florida Seniors in Action to the Anchor Shops

I championed relocating South Florida Seniors in Action (SFSA) from the South Shore Community Center to a larger, City-owned space at Anchor Shops. The move was prompted by potential construction at the South Shore site and provided SFSA with a more spacious office. The relocation ensures SFSA can continue its vital services to the elderly community in Miami Beach.

Repeal of CD-2 Co-Living Incentives and Reduce TC-C Co-Living Cap

This ordinance eliminates the allowance for co-living units on Washington Avenue, removing all references to such housing in this area. Additionally, it decreases the total number of co-living units permitted in North Beach. I appreciate Mayor Meiner and Commissioners Bhatt, Magazine, and Saurez's collaboration as co-sponsors of this ordinance.

Repeal of 0.5 FAR Bonus for Hotels

The new ordinance eliminates the 0.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonus for hotel uses in the CD-2 District along Alton Road, Normandy Drive, 71st Street, and Collins Avenue north of 63rd Street, as well as for hotels located within South Beach's CD-2 District. Previously, this bonus allowed hotels in mixed-use developments to exceed the standard FAR limit of 1.5, with a potential total FAR of 2.0. By removing this bonus, the City Commission aims to preserve the character of the area, limit hotel construction, and promote more residential development to address the city's housing needs. This change reflects the city's goal to maintain neighborhood balance and curb overdevelopment while encouraging diverse residential living alongside complementary commercial businesses. I appreciate Commissioners Bhatt, Magazine and Suarez co-sponsoring this ordinance.

Revitalizing the 100-300 Blocks of Lincoln Road



For several years, even prior to my election, I have been a steadfast advocate for investing in the revitalization of the three-block stretch of Lincoln Road between the 100-300 blocks, focusing on enhancing both its aesthetics and safety. In June 2023, the City Commission approved my initiative for a transformative public-private partnership aimed at redeveloping this vital stretch of Lincoln Road into a dynamic mixed-use area, complete with a new residential component. This redevelopment will not only improve traffic flow and functionality but also address critical safety concerns, update

aging underground infrastructure, and implement flood mitigation measures to resolve potential sanitary issues.

The project is being funded through an equally shared contribution from all partners: \$4 million from the developer, \$4 million from the City of Miami Beach, and \$4 million secured through the State of Florida's appropriation process. Last session, I lobbied in Tallahassee to secure state funding for this project. I want to thank Senator Avila and Representative Vicki Lopez who sponsored the appropriation request in November 2023 for the FY 2024-2025 budget, which was approved in July 2024. While the City is contributing \$4 million, our community will benefit from \$12 million worth of improvements to its right of way – truly a tremendous return on investment for our community.

The City Administration and the City Attorney's Office have been working with the developer to review the "Improvement and Maintenance Agreement," which is needed to move the public project forward. It is anticipated the agreement will be presented to the City Commission for final approval, possibly in March 2025. Both the public and private development project were approved by the Historic Preservation Board in 2024.

Rollback of Parking & Parks Fee Increases

Together with the united sponsorship of the full City Commission, I championed and passed legislation to roll back the proposed increases in Parking and Parks and Recreation fees for FY 2025, keeping rates at FY 2024 levels. The decision is a direct response to the need for financial relief for both residents and visitors. Additionally, the legislation caps future fee hikes at 3% annually, starting in FY 2026. The scheduled parking rate increases for October 2024 have been rescinded, ensuring no changes to fees for residents or the workforce.

Safety Railing along the west-end of Lincoln Road 10th Street, and 14th Street

I introduced a resolution directing the installation of a railing along the west-end of Lincoln Road and at the street ends of 10th and 14th Streets to prevent unauthorized docking from the public seawall. This project aims to address ongoing issues with illegal docking, which have contributed to noise, litter, and safety concerns for residents. The City has appropriated \$150,000 for this initiative in the current fiscal year's budget, and Public Works is actively working with the Procurement Department to move the project forward and get it out to bid. This cost-effective solution will help enhance safety, maintain the area's aesthetics, and improve quality of life for our community.

Saving the South Shore Community Center from Demolition

The City Commission adopted my resolution to remove the South Shore Community Center from consideration as a potential site for the new Fire Station No. 1 project. The South Shore Community Center, designed by renowned architect Morris Lapidus, is an architecturally significant building that plays a vital role in the local community, particularly for seniors and families. The resolution emphasizes the importance of preserving this building to maintain the character of the neighborhood and protect valuable community assets. In response to concerns raised by residents and community organizations about the impact on the neighborhood and local services, the City Commission has decided to prioritize the preservation of the South Shore Community Center.



The resolution underscores the City's commitment to balancing public safety needs with the protection of its historic and cultural resources. I would like to extend my gratitude to Commissioners Bhatt and Rosen Gonzalez, whose unwavering leadership has been a force in securing the future of the South Shore Community Center. Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez has championed reestablishing the senior lunch program and Commissioner Bhatt recently organized a beautification event to plant new greenery around the Center, helping to restore and enhance the surrounding community. In addition, Commissioner Bhatt has initiated an important referral to the Historic Preservation Board to consider the designation of the South Shore Community Center.

Additionally, I am excited about the initiative sponsored by Commissioner Magazine to establish a summer camp program at the South Shore Community Center. I look forward to supporting this effort as it progresses, further strengthening the Center's role as a key asset in our community.

As its name suggests, the South Shore Community Center is the community's center, and I've convened an ad-hoc advisory committee of residents to help establish a calendar of programming and activities that the community would like to occur in the many public spaces it offers. I anticipate the committee to begin meeting later this year.

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Testing Regulation

In July, I sponsored and passed legislation aimed at enhancing public health and expanding access to critical STI testing services. The ordinance updates the Miami Beach Resiliency Code to define STI testing services and exempts them from certain zoning regulations that previously limited where such services could be provided. This change allows STI testing to occur in residential, multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use districts, making it more accessible to those in need. Unfortunately, the HIV "hot spots" in Miami-Dade County include zip code 33139, which covers all of South Beach. With Miami-Dade County facing a public health crisis, including high rates of HIV transmission, this measure seeks to support vulnerable communities, particularly the LGBTQ population, by improving access to essential health services. I appreciate Commissioner Dominguez for co-sponsoring this ordinance.

Shared-Use Path Design

After working with neighbors and stakeholders, I introduced legislation adopting the new design for the Chase Avenue and W. 34th Street Shared-Use Path Project, which includes a modified layout to address concerns from residents. The shared-use path will be located on the north side of the Miami Beach Golf Club between Alton Road and Prairie Avenue and ultimately, this project will connect to a series of paths around the Miami Beach Golf Club. This project has been in the works since 2018, and my resolution helps advance this long-awaited project.

Sidewalk Obstructions

This year, I passed an important ordinance that strengthens pedestrian safety and accessibility in Miami Beach while protecting constitutional rights. The law prohibits obstructing sidewalks, streets, and public walkways, ensuring that pedestrians can move freely and safely. This ordinance has become a vital tool for our police to manage safety during tense protests, ensuring that demonstrations do not impede pedestrians or their safety. At the same time, it respects First Amendment rights by allowing peaceful protestors to move to nearby public spaces, if necessary, without disrupting public movement. Importantly, the ordinance also includes compassionate treatment for our homeless population, ensuring that if someone must be arrested for obstructing the right of way, they are first offered access to a homeless shelter or immediate housing.

Speed Detection Systems in School Zones

I am proud to have passed an ordinance to enhance the safety of children walking and cycling to school. This new ordinance authorizes the installation of speed detection systems (SDS) in key school zones across Miami Beach to enforce speed limits more effectively, particularly where speeding exceeds 10 mph above the posted limits. This initiative follows a comprehensive traffic study identifying high-risk areas and reflects our commitment to ensuring safer routes for our students. With this ordinance, we are taking proactive measures to protect our community's most vulnerable, providing better enforcement during school hours and beyond.

Stop the Pause Policy

With the guidance of the Inspector General, I am very proud to have crafted the "Stop the Pause" policy. This ordinance is a crucial step in ensuring the timely progress of critical infrastructure projects, such as stormwater systems, fire-flow improvements, and water and sewer upgrades. In response to concerns about delays, the ordinance establishes clear voting requirements to prevent unnecessary halts to essential initiatives. Below are examples of cost escalations partially caused by the "pausing" of projects as identified in a recent Inspector General report:

- Palm and Hibiscus Islands Neighborhood Improvement Projects saw their budgets escalate from \$9,086,774 to \$50,217,166.
- West Avenue Phase II Project jumped from approximately \$40,000,000 to around \$90,000,000 (ongoing).
- Indian Creek Project's costs surged from \$25.4 million to over \$50 million, accompanied by a four-year extension in project completion time (ongoing).

Advancing this policy was necessary to keep our city dry and resilient to the challenges associated with climate change which we've all experienced recently. By setting higher voting thresholds for stopping these projects, the policy aims to maintain momentum, reduce waste of taxpayer dollars, and support the efficient development of infrastructure that benefits the entire community. I appreciate Commissioner Suarez for co-sponsoring this ordinance.

Supporting Development of the Convention Center Hotel

I led the effort to pass an ordinance that permits the use of Redevelopment Agency funds to support the development of public areas at the Convention Center Headquarters Hotel. The ordinance change allows the use of Redevelopment Trust Fund resources to finance the development of public spaces within the hotel, including meeting rooms, banquet facilities, parking garages, and lobbies. This amendment will help bring the Convention Center Hotel project to life and reinforce Miami Beach's position as a premier destination for conventions and large-scale events. I appreciate Commissioner Bhatt for co-sponsoring this ordinance.

Terminating the Contract with Poseidon Ferry

In March 2024, the City of Miami Beach entered into an agreement with Poseidon to launch a water taxi service linking the Purdy Avenue Dock with Sea Isle Marina in Downtown Miami. While the service officially began on June 30, 2024, mechanical issues with the vessel led to significant disruptions and continuous service interruptions. As a result, Commissioner Suarez and I sponsored a resolution to cancel the contract with Poseidon Ferry due to these defaults. Despite this setback, I am optimistic about finding new, smaller-scale transportation solutions for Miami Beach.

The Transportation and Mobility Department has initiated a competitive procurement process to select a permanent water taxi service provider with the goal of launching the new service in FY2026.

Transparent Disclosure of Fee Increases at First Budget Workshop

With the support of my colleagues, I passed a new policy aimed at enhancing transparency and protecting residents from unexpected fee increases. This resolution directs the City Administration to include a comprehensive memorandum detailing all automatic annual or biannual fee increases in the budget packet distributed during the first budget workshop each fiscal year. By providing a clear comparison between current and prospective fees, this measure ensures that the City Commission is fully informed of any fee adjustments before they are adopted. This proactive approach allows for better oversight and ensures that the financial impact of fee increases is considered during budget discussions, helping to safeguard our residents, businesses, and visitors from unforeseen financial burdens.

Voluntary Disabled Parking Registration to Curb Fraudulent Abuse

This ordinance introduced a voluntary registration program aimed at addressing the abuse of disabled parking permits. Every person with a disability who is in possession of a valid placard still receives four free hours of parking, whether they are registered in the program or not. The registration is required only for those who wish to park for more than four hours without incurring fees. By requiring registrants to provide basic vehicle and medical information, the program ensures only valid permit holders benefit from extended free parking in City lots, facilities, and timed on-street parking spaces. This measure aims to reduce fraudulent use of disabled placards while maintaining accessible parking for those who truly need it.

Causes Supported

Childhood Cancer Month

I had the honor of sponsoring a resolution designating September 2024 as "Childhood Cancer Awareness Month" in Miami Beach. This important initiative seeks to raise awareness of childhood cancer, the leading cause of death by disease among children in the U.S., and the need for continued research, treatment advancements, and support for affected families. Childhood cancer knows no boundaries and impacts children from all walks of life. By recognizing this month, we not only honor the bravery of young patients and their families, but also acknowledge the tireless efforts of healthcare professionals, organizations, and advocacy groups working to provide hope and assistance to those affected.

Clean Miami Beach



To further strengthen Miami Beach's commitment to environmental preservation, I introduced and successfully passed a resolution approving a \$45,000 grant allocated to Clean Miami Beach, Inc. This funding supports their extensive environmental programming, including community cleanup events, educational initiatives like "Classrooms on the Sand" and microplastic art workshops, as well as the annual EcoFest. Clean Miami Beach has been instrumental in keeping Miami Beach free from harmful pollutants and plastic waste, fostering a cleaner, healthier

environment for both residents and wildlife.

Donation of Storage Trailer to the Miami Beach Fire Rescue Cadet Post #1510

I facilitated the donation of a storage trailer to the Miami Beach Life-Safety Institute of Fire & EMS (MBLIFE), a nonprofit organization dedicated to life-safety education. The trailer is being used to support MBLIFE's Fire Rescue Cadet Post #1510, which trains local youth interested in careers in public safety, EMS, and the fire service. Through this program, cadets gain hands-on experience in physical fitness, fire skills, emergency medical training, and firefighter ethics. This donation helps provide the necessary resources for the program's continued success and growth.

Gift of Life



Gift of Life's mission is to cure blood cancer through cellular therapy, and I was deeply honored to be recognized by this incredible organization at their gala this past November for my ongoing support of their life-saving work. One of the most impactful initiatives we've championed locally is the partnership with both our Miami Beach Police Department and Fire Department. These teams have graciously hosted swabbing drives where participants provide a simple cheek swab to donate DNA, potentially matching someone in desperate need

of a life-saving bone marrow transplant. These swabs are sent to a lab for tissue typing, and the information is added to the international donor registry, giving patients worldwide the chance to find a matching donor. It's a small act with the potential for profound, life-changing results, and I'm proud to work alongside such dedicated community leaders in the fight against blood cancer.

H3: health. hope. healing.

In October I had the privilege of hosting the Cancer Hero Awards alongside H3: health. hope. healing. These awards were designed to celebrate unsung heroes who have made a profound impact on the lives of breast cancer patients but who often go unrecognized. Congratulations to the winners on their well-deserved recognition:

- Cat Prescott, Spirit of Hope Award
- Dr. Baruch Jacobs, Spirit of Hope Award
- Dr. Starr Mautner, Oncology Treatment Provider of the Year
- Dr. Elisa Krill-Jackson, Oncology Treatment Provider of the Year
- Rita Star, Advocate of the Year
- Deborah Litwak, M.A. Advocate of the Year
- Cynthia Jones, Caretaker of the Year
- Nichole Doty, Caretaker of the Year



Hebrew Academy / Lehrman School Parking



I facilitated the process for the Hebrew Academy and Lehrman School to obtain parking permits, ensuring both educational institutions had the necessary access to parking. This initiative addressed a key logistical need, enhancing convenience for staff, students, and visitors, and helping the schools operate more efficiently.

Hispanic Heritage Festival

One of the highlights of this year was sponsoring a resolution to support an important cultural event in our community, the Hispanic Heritage Festival. This resolution allocated a one-time matching grant of \$15,000 to support the production of the Hispanic Heritage Festival, held on September 28, 2024, at the Miami Beach Bandshell. Organized by Almodóvar Musica, LLC, the festival celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to honor the many contributions of Hispanic Americans to our culture and society. The funding helped ensure the success of this vibrant event, bringing the community together to celebrate and appreciate the rich cultural traditions of the Hispanic community.



Legal Services for Tenants



Through a partnership with Legal Services of Greater Miami, this grant offers Miami Beach tenants the opportunity to access legal defense and assistance with housing matters. Residents can make in-person appointments to discuss their concerns and receive guidance on tenant rights, disputes, and potential evictions. This service also includes educational workshops to help tenants better understand their legal options and rights under Florida law.

LGBTQ History Month

I had the honor of sponsoring a resolution alongside Commissioner Tanya Bhatt urging the Miami-Dade County School Board to recognize October 2024 as LGBTQ History Month, in a manner that complies with state and federal laws, as well as School Board policies. LGBTQ History Month is a time to honor the history and achievements of the LGBTQ community, raise awareness about their contributions, and highlight the ongoing struggles they face. This resolution underscores our commitment to diversity and inclusion, ensuring that LGBTQ students feel safe, seen, and supported in their educational environment.



Liga Contra el Cancer



Over the past two years, I've been proud to have led in bringing this vital service to Miami Beach, ensuring that uninsured women in our community have access to potentially life-saving screenings. Since hosting the mobile mammogram events in partnership with La Liga Contra el Cancer hundreds of women have received free screenings.

The League Against Cancer was founded in Florida in 1975, using the model of a similar organization that began treating cancer patients in 1925, in Havana, Cuba. That organization grew to include a world-renowned oncology center and operated until the Cuban Revolution in 1959. In Miami, the League Against Cancer Medical Center serves as a treatment

center for people who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Miami Beach Music Festival

Another key initiative I had the privilege of sponsoring this year was a resolution to support the Miami Music Festival, now operating as the Miami Beach Classical Music Festival. This resolution approved the eligibility of the Miami Beach Classical Music Festival to apply for a grant from the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority (VCA) and seek a Special Event Sponsorship from the City. The festival, known for its free, family-friendly cultural programming, played an important role in enriching the cultural landscape of Miami Beach. By securing both the VCA grant and Special Event Sponsorship, the festival was able to enhance the scope and quality of its impactful events, further benefiting our community in 2024.

Miami Beach Pride 2024

I proudly initiated Miami Beach's sponsorship of the Miami Beach Pride Festival, which took place from April 12-14, 2024. The support included a cash sponsorship of up to \$250,000, as previously approved in the FY 2024 budget, along with the waiver of special event and city service fees totaling approximately \$52,995.38. This event, organized by Miami Beach Pride, Inc., celebrates the LGBTQ community and its allies, and featured festivities in Lummus Park and along Ocean Drive.



Miami Beach Public Schools Graduation and Promotions Ceremony

As part of my commitment to supporting our local education system, I sponsored a resolution that provided crucial support to Miami Beach public school graduations and promotions. The resolution waived room rental fees at the Miami Beach Convention Center and offered a sponsorship of up to \$50,000 per year for a three-year pilot program from Fiscal Years 2024 to 2026. This initiative was designed to offset the significant costs associated with these events, which ranged from \$5,000 to \$20,000. By offering this financial support, we helped ensure that our public schools had a cost-effective, convenient venue to celebrate the achievements of our students and strengthened community engagement.



Mitzvah Day Food Distribution

It was an honor to partner with Temple Beth Sholom, along with Julie Basner and her son Owen, to host a "Mitzvah Day" Food Distribution last February. We fed hundreds of households with fresh produce and healthy grains. I'm so proud to have started this lovely tradition in partnership with Temple Beth Sholom.

Moonlighter

I sponsored the lease extension of Moonlighter Makerspace, located at the Pennsylvania Avenue Garage, to support its mission of providing a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts,

and Math (S.T.E.A.M.) education center, co-working space, and digital fabrication lab. The lease extension includes additional public benefits such as free field trips, youth internships, and discounts for Miami Beach residents and nonprofits. Moonlighter also expanded its existing programs to include scholarships for up to 50 needs-based students to attend Summer S.T.E.A.M. Camps, scholarships for after-school sessions with transportation for low-income Fienberg/Fisher K-8 and Biscayne Beach Elementary students, paid summer internships for Miami Beach Senior

High School students, and on-site S.T.E.A.M. programs at local schools. This initiative also offers enhanced programming for local public schools, teachers, and seniors, fostering greater access to innovative learning opportunities within our community.

National Black History Month in the City of Miami Beach

I had the privilege of joining my colleagues, Commissioners Bhatt, Dominguez, and Magazine, in supporting a resolution that recognized and honored the month of February as National Black History Month in the City of Miami Beach. Black History Month, which originated in 1926 under the leadership of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, celebrated the rich heritage, achievements, and contributions of Black Americans throughout history. It provided an opportunity for reflection on the struggles and triumphs of Black individuals who have shaped our nation. This year's theme, "African Americans and the Arts," highlighted the profound impact African Americans have had on various art forms, from visual and performing arts to music, literature, and more. By recognizing Black History Month, we reaffirmed our commitment to equality, inclusion, and honoring the invaluable contributions of the Black community to our culture and society.

National LGBTQ Taskforce & Winter Party

The National LGBTQ Taskforce's Winter Party Festival is one of Miami Beach's signature annual events. In recognition of the festival's importance, I sponsored a resolution to support the 2025 Winter Party Festival with several key actions: waiving special event fees, sponsoring forty parking passes for volunteers, and approving an extension of alcoholic beverage service hours for select establishments during the festival (February 28, March 1, and March 2, 2025). These measures were designed to enhance the event's success and ensure a positive experience for attendees



and volunteers alike. By providing this support, we reaffirmed our commitment to fostering cultural events that bring the community together and support our local economy.

Pridelines Project SAFE

As part of Miami Beach's continued dedication to fostering an inclusive environment, I passed a resolution approving a grant to Pridelines, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to the well-being of LGBTQ youth. This funding supports the "Miami Beach Cares" social media campaign, designed to provide critical resources

and support for LGBTQ youth through digital platforms and the city trolley.

In addition, I have sponsored legislation approving financial support to Pridelines Safe Space project, a peer-led LGBTQ support and discussion group, a peer-led transgender and gender non-conforming support group, and social Fridays that include game night and movie nights. This program, Project Safe (Safe Accommodations for Everyone), includes structured case management, transportation assistance, relocation assistance, and professional-facilitated counseling and therapy.

Run with Raven – Celebrating 50 Years!



It was a true privilege to sponsor a special event celebrating Robert "Raven" Kraft's incredible 50-year milestone of daily runs on Miami Beach. Since 1975, Raven has run eight miles every day, totaling over 145,000 miles — nearly six times around the Earth! On December 31, 2024, the community gathered for a celebration at the Art Deco Welcome Center which my office helped organize. It was an evening of food, drinks, live music, and performances by Raven himself. To honor his legacy, a ceremony at Fifth Street and Ocean Drive was held earlier in the day where Raven kicked-off his 50th-anniversary run, a tribute to his

dedication. This event was a true reflection of Raven's incredible impact on our community and his inspiring commitment to both fitness and the arts.

SoBe Jazz Festival

The Annual South Beach Jazz Festival, which takes place every January with multiple performances throughout Miami Beach, is a cherished cultural event that draws music lovers from all over. This year will mark the 9th anniversary of the festival, and I was proud to support it by sponsoring an ordinance that amends the City's sponsorship policy to provide greater financial flexibility to Miami Beach-based non-profit event organizers.



Under the updated ordinance, these organizers may now request a larger advance of the City's cash sponsorship contribution—beyond the previous 15% cap—if they meet specific criteria. These include demonstrating that a larger advance is necessary to cover upfront costs such as payments to artists and production companies, having a history of at least five years of event production, and maintaining an event budget not exceeding \$500,000.

Moving forward, this ordinance will provide similar support for other institutional events in Miami Beach, helping to reduce financial strain and ensuring that these signature celebrations can thrive and grow within our community.

StylesSaves

I had the privilege of sponsoring a resolution to support the *Style Saves Inc.* Back-to-School Program, which provides essential school supplies, clothing, and food assistance to thousands of students and their families. The City Commission approved a waiver of rental fees for the Miami Beach Convention Center, to host the event, as well as a sponsorship to support the program. Held annually, this program benefits not only Miami Beach residents but also extends its reach globally, providing aid in countries like Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras. I appreciate Mayor Steven Meiner and Commissioners Bhatt, Dominguez, Magazine, Rosen Gonzalez, and Suarez for co-sponsoring this legislation.



Women's History Month



I was proud to sponsor a resolution that supported a meaningful celebration of Women's History Month in March 2024. This resolution waived permit fees for the installation of a pop-up exhibit in Lummus Park, building upon the success of a similar exhibit in 2020, which marked the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage. The exhibit highlighted notable women who made significant contributions across various fields of history. This initiative continued our efforts to recognize and honor the invaluable role of women in shaping society, while making the exhibit accessible to all residents and visitors without any financial burden on the City.

THANK YOU
FOR ALLOWING US
THE OPPORTUNITY
TO SERVE YOU.

