

# PLANNING

## DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Planning Department is dedicated to developing, refining, and implementing a comprehensive urban planning vision for Miami Beach with the goal of preserving the integrity of the City’s unique design heritage, and enhancing the quality and diversity of the urban experience, inclusive of its residential neighborhoods, business districts, resorts, recreation, and entertainment areas.

## DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

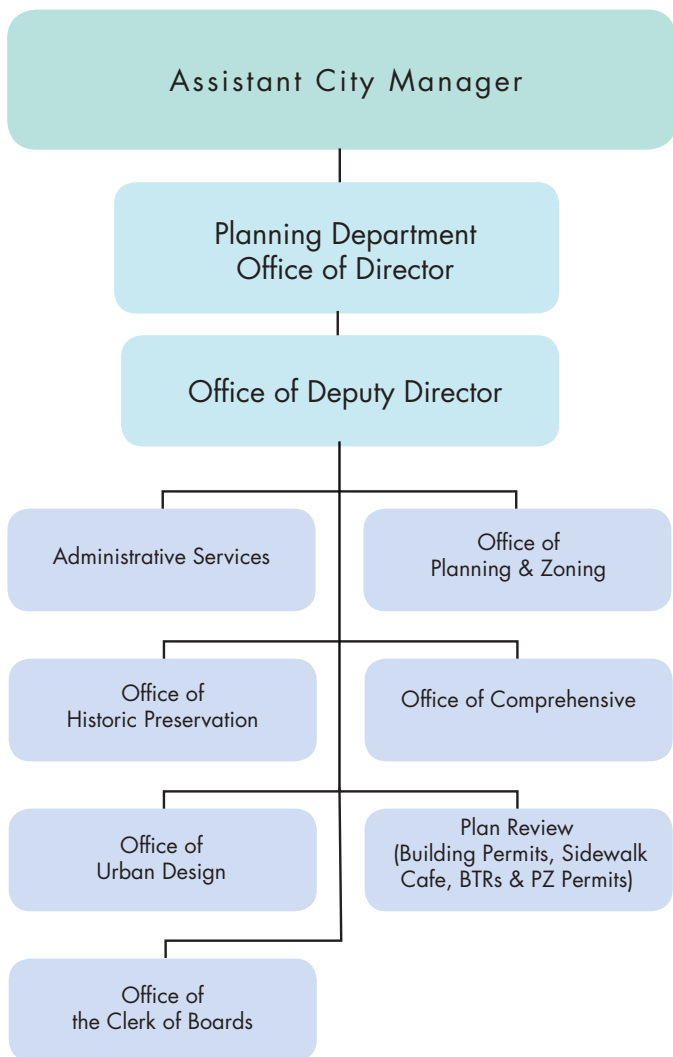
The Department provides guidance on design and applies regulatory standards and policies with the intent of ensuring progressive urban design principles, while preserving the City’s rich architectural and historic resources.

The Planning Department is responsible for providing professional analysis and recommendations to the City Manager and City Commission on all land development issues. We serve as staff to the City’s Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Design Review Board, and Historic Preservation Board. The Department processes board applications, reviews and prepares recommendations, and is also responsible for implementing and updating the comprehensive plan as required by State Statutes. The Department reviews all building permits for compliance with the land development regulations, board orders, and for consistency with architectural review guidelines as well as preservation criteria.

Additionally, the Department conducts studies on specialized topics, such as resiliency and sustainability, growth management, wayfinding, historic designation, urban and landscape design, and prepares master and conceptual plans for neighborhoods and conservation districts. Such efforts generally involve extensive public participation and collaboration with other City departments and governmental agencies to facilitate implementation of the plans once approved by City Commission.

## FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

The Department is funded from the General Fund. Fees related to the Land Development approval process and Building Development Process were analyzed. The results found that fees had not been adjusted in over ten years. Subsequently, the City Commission approved an update to the fees and methodology in December of 2015 which was implemented in May of 2016. The new fee schedule was intended to yield enough revenues to offset the operating costs for all processes under the department. Since then, the City Commission directed staff to again review fees and applicability thereof to capture revenue from other sources which are exempt from fees. The consulting team has made several recommendations to apply fees to not only new construction, but alterations as well. They have recommended reductions in some fees, and increase others, all within the context of generating enough revenue to offset expenditures as intended during the 2015 analysis. However, the Administration does have some concerns with the impact that a \$40,000 cap and reduction of the fee from \$0.50 to \$0.30 will have on revenues. Potential impact to department revenue is estimated to be between \$125,000 and \$200,000 annually.



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## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Department serves as the liaison to several Land Use Boards (LUB) that include Planning, Design Review, Historic Preservation, and Board of Adjustment. Additionally, the department staffs the Commission's Land Use and Development Committee and is also the liaison for the Flood Plain Management Board. The Planning Department conducts Special Area Studies that require participation with civic organizations such as the Miami Beach Community Development Corporation, North Beach Development Corporation, Housing Authority, as well as several homeowners' associations and neighborhood groups. The Department also addresses and responds to requirements from State agencies and the South Florida Regional Planning Council and represents the City at selected committee meetings with the School Board, Miami-Dade County, and other neighboring municipalities based on various inter-local agreements. Internally, the Department maintains a close working relationship with various departments including Transportation, Public Works, City Clerk, Information Technology, Building, Code Compliance, Economic Development, Fire, Office of Capital Improvement Projects, Parks and Recreation, Environment and Sustainability, Real Estate Housing and Community Development, Office of the City Attorney, and Property Management, and provides technical and professional guidance on projects that may need approval from LUB, Commission Committees, or the City Commission.

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Adopted North Beach Town Center Urban Core (TC-C) Ordinance (2018-4224). The ordinance incorporates the elements of design in the North Beach Master Plan and in the floor area ratio (FAR) Voter Guide from the last election. It is a balanced approach intended to spur sustainable development to revitalize North Beach. The ordinance established a Town Center – Central Core (TC-C) zoning district with an FAR of 3.5, that replaced the TC-1, TC-2, TC-3, and TC-3(c) districts within the boundaries of the area established by the FAR referendum. This provide for a more uniform and cohesive Town Center area, allowing for a seamless distribution of allowable FAR, height, setbacks and uses. The remainder of TC districts outside the boundaries of the overlay area will not be affected by these regulations. The regulations in the ordinance are consistent with the recommendations of the North Beach Master Plan and the referenced guidelines in the Intensity Increase Study prepared by Shulman + Associates in 2014.
- Adopted North Beach National Register Conservation District Overlay Comprehensive Plan Amendments ordinance (2018-4186). The ordinance created an overlay for the Residential Multifamily (RM-1) zoning district within the North Beach National Register Districts. The North Beach National Register Conservation District Overlay is comprised of area specific regulations that are intended to incentivize the retention of existing 'contributing' buildings, as well as ensure that new infill buildings are compatible with their surroundings.

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONT'D

This overlay is applicable to the entire boundary of each National Register District that is in a RM-1 zoning district, regardless of whether the property is located inside or outside of a locally designated historic district. This approach applies consistent standards for new construction within the entirety of the National Register District boundaries, including the areas being considered for local historic designation. This ensures cohesion of future development within the larger National Register areas.

- Adopted North Beach Town Center FAR Increase Land Development Regulations ordinance (2018-4190). In order to encourage the revitalization of the North Beach area, the City Commission hired Dover, Kohl, and Partners, Inc. to prepare a master plan for the North Beach area. The Master Plan recommended increasing the floor area ratio (FAR) to 3.5 for the Town Center zoning districts (TC-1, TC-2, and TC-3), which was approved by the voters via referendum. The increase allows for development that creates a critical mass of people, enabling a mix of residential and commercial uses that better service the North Beach community, as well as incentivize appropriate and pedestrian oriented new development in the North Beach Town Center area.
- Adopted Unified Development Sites ordinance (2018-4162). Amended the Land Development Regulations by amending Chapter 118 "Administration and Review Procedures" to clarify the maximum allowable FAR for unified development sites containing buildings with nonconforming FAR and/or elevated open-air bridges, passageways or connections used solely for pedestrian circulation between buildings. This facilitates any future change in zoning district classification modifying the maximum FAR, inclusive of bonus FAR, for a district within a unified development site.

**Implemented the North Beach Conservation District Overlay and adopted the North Beach Town Center Core Zoning Overlay to spur revitalization of North Beach**

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## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONT'D

- Adopted Assisted Living Facility and Medical Use Zoning Regulations ordinance (2018-4170). This ordinance ensures transparency for the zoning requirements for medical uses. Zoning districts are included for which the different classes of uses are permitted, and which uses are treated as main permitted use or require Conditional Use approval from the Planning Board within the various zoning districts. Distance separation requirements are included between and within certain types of facilities so as to not create excessive impacts on any particular neighborhood. It ensures minimum standards for different types of medical uses to minimize impacts to surrounding areas.
- Adopted Residential Performance Standards (RPS) Open Space Requirements ordinance (2018-4203). Section 142-704 of the Land Development Regulations was amended to reflect minimum open space ratio requirements in the Performance Standard Districts. The amendment permits lots in the RPS districts that are 60 feet in width or less to have private spaces accessible only by residents of individual units considered open space, despite not being generally accessible to all residents. The actual amount of required open space would not change and allows for smaller spaces to count towards meeting the requirement.
- Adopted RM PRD Alcohol Regulations ordinance (2018-4169). At the request of residents of Fisher Island, the sale of alcoholic beverages as part of accessory dining facilities in apartment buildings located within the Residential Multifamily-Planned Residential Development (RM-PRD) district was amended in the Land Development Regulations. Based on the accessory use requirements for apartment buildings in section 142-902(2), dining rooms are only permitted for the use of residents. Since the sale of alcoholic beverages is an accessory to dining rooms, it would be subject to the same limitations and facilitate limited service. The island is only accessible through a private ferry, via Terminal Island and has restricted public access.

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONT'D

- Adopted Artistic Murals ordinance (2018-4191). This ordinance creates limits on the overall size of static (non-electronic) murals, graphics and images. Specifically, the limitation of two murals per property, and the aggregate area of all murals is limited to 100 square feet. Any mural or super graphic in excess of 100 square feet requires City Commission approval. The standard applies to electronic murals as well as super graphics. The amendment also included a no variance provision, and criteria for artist signatures.
- Reformatted, reviewed, and updated the Historic Properties Database to reflect accurate information. This includes the identification of all 2,611 buildings within the City's 14 local historic districts and identifies all accessory buildings not previously recorded. This information was subsequently placed into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database that includes footprints for all buildings located in a local historic district and information such as address, contributing classification, architect, year of construction, architectural style, and original permit number. The goal of the project is to create a public web application that provides information and historic documentation for each building.
- Received the Miami Design Preservation League Preservation award. The Planning Department's Historic Preservation staff received the "Miami Design Preservation League Preservation Award" for their work on the survey, research, and historic district designations of the North Shore and Normandy Isles Local Historic Districts in North Beach.
- Completed Matrix Consulting Group for a Development Process Study. The Matrix Consulting Group reviewed the development process including board approvals, administrative authority, governing regulations, and permitting process. This study generated recommendations for immediate improvements, identified bottlenecks, and restrictive regulations as well as duplicative and outdated processes.



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## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Adopt regulations to support the City’s efforts in becoming more resilient to the impacts of climate change including sea level rise
- Identify sections in the Land Development Regulations that are in conflict or impede process improvement and delivery of services

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

The revitalization of North Beach is a long-term initiative and will remain a focal point of policy makers for the foreseeable future. To that end, the Commission has approved several incentives to spur development and the revitalization of underserved areas. We expect that these incentives will generate additional plan and permitting activity.

Operationally, sustained increases in requests for reduced turn-around times for permit reviews and a consistent number of submittal of applications for Land Use Board Approval will continue to tax the resources of the Department affecting our ability to deliver services.

The department is also in the process of updating the City’s Comprehensive Plan as required by State Statute. Chapter 163. The Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) will improve the City’s Comprehensive Plan with new goals, objectives, and policies, which will expand and include measures to address sea level rise and sustainability in the built environment.

The City Commission has issued a referral to the Land Use and Development Committee to discuss the update of the Land Development Regulations and make a recommendation on updates to better serve the residents and provide predictability to the development community.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Main Vision Area:

### Neighborhoods

Management Objectives:



- **Prosperity**
  - Revitalize targeted areas and increase investment
- **Neighborhoods**
  - Modernize and streamline our old and complex land development regulations and City codes
  - Prioritize historic gems and create opportunities to build resilience into historic properties
- **Mobility**
  - Increase housing options for current and future residents
  - Support affordable, compatible workforce housing
- **Organization Innovation**
  - Support all objectives to improve strategic decision making and financial stewardship, making the city more business friendly and user friendly, with an employee culture of problem solving and engagement

Strategic Plan Actions:

- **MAKE** substantial progress on North Beach Town Center/Byron Carlyle/Ocean Terrace.

Budget Enhancement Actions:

- Sea Level Rise Impact Study
- Re-write the City’s Land Development Regulations

Resilient305 Actions:

- **BUILD** an Inclusive Economy
- **STRENGTHEN** Resilience Planning
- **BOUNCE** Forward 305

