



City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, [www.miamibeachfl.gov](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov)

The Mayor's 41<sup>st</sup> street Committee ("Committee") is created pursuant to the Mayor's authority to establish Mayor's boards or committees under Section 2-27 (b) (2) of the City Code. The purpose of the committee is to study and make recommendations as to how to improve the experience for residents and visitors on 41<sup>st</sup> street, which is one of the major gateways to Miami Beach.

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee**  
4:00 PM Thursday December 1, 2020  
**MINUTES**

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

- Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk
- Betty Behar
- Michael Burnstine
- Yechiel Ciment
- Bonnie Crabtree
- Seth Gadinsky, Chair
- Eric Hankin
- Robin Jacobs
- Marcella Novella
- Jeremy Wachtel

**Elected Officials in attendance**

- Commissioner Steve Meiner

**City Staff in Attendance**

- Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager
- Rickelle Williams, Economic Development Director
- Maria Hernandez, General Obligation Bond Program Director
- Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist
- Allison Novack, Community Information Manager
- Kevin Pullido, Neighborhoods Affairs Manager
- Vanessa Veracruz, Neighborhoods Affairs Coordinator
- Thais Vieira, GO Bond Program Assistant Director
- Elizabeth Wheaton, Environment and Sustainability Director

Seth Gadinsky opened the meeting at 4:08 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance of the meeting.

## **City Update**

Gedel Merzius began city updates by formally welcoming Commissioner Steve Meiner to the meeting gave a brief update. Commissioner Meiner discussed the A frame signage and retail extension onto the sidewalk item that was previously a motion made by the 41<sup>st</sup> street committee.

## **AECOM 41<sup>st</sup> street schematic presentation**

AECOM presented the final conceptual streetscape design to the Mayor's 41st Street Blue Ribbon Committee. Sarah Basset of AECOM presented the final concept to committee members. There have been three (3) major topics of discussion around the proposed conceptual design. They include on-street parking, trees & palms, and fixed seating.

**On-Street Parking:** The proposed conceptual design maintains 70% of the existing parking spaces along 41st Street, and 94% of the parking spaces on the side streets. While there was a strong desire to widen sidewalks along 41st Street, there was also great concern for the removal of most or all parking spaces. A parking study of the corridor showed that there is surplus parking available in nearby parking lots and garages that can compensate for the on-street parking spots removed. However, it also found that some on-street parking spaces should remain to maintain public parking availability during peak use hours. For these reasons, AECOM's final hybrid design proposes to widen sidewalks where possible, while also keeping most on-street parking spaces available for public parking.

**Trees & Palms:** The proposed conceptual design includes a total of 332 trees and palms, which is a greater overall tree count than what exists today. The design maintains 72% of the royal palms on 41st Street and 62% of the existing ornamental palms. The design also recommends the planting of 125 new canopy trees along 41st Street and the side streets.

The Urban Forestry Master Plan categorizes the 41st Street Corridor as a Highly Visible and High-Profile Corridor. The Plan makes the following recommendations for this corridor typology:

- Require the extensive use of green infrastructure (suspended pavements) to provide soil volume for proper root growth;
- Consider visibility, safety and building protrusions: select species that can provide clearances of minimum of 14 feet when mature;
- Consider reducing spacing between selected species to provide greater shade;
- Consider reducing loading zone areas and repurposing them for bulb-out and street trees;
- Diversifying the street tree palette to include species regarded as 'expensive' or 'luxury';
- Do no use self-cleaning trees or palms with a high index of litter, this includes royal palms;
- Recommended predominant species category include large canopy trees with narrow to oval canopies and estate type palms that are not self-cleaning.

The Urban Forestry Master Plan is a guiding document. The proposed AECOM's final hybrid design provides a compromise between the community's desire to maintain royal palms and the Urban Forestry Master Plan's recommendations for increasing walkability and diversity. It should be noted that during the next phase of design, a certified arborist will assess the condition of the existing tree canopy. Additional trees may need to be removed and relocated during construction due to health, condition, and/or conflict with design.

**Fixed Seating:** The proposed conceptual design includes fixed seating walls at four (4) mid-block locations. The four (4) seat wall locations will offer pedestrians with a place to stop, rest and relax, on their way to or from their destination. The seat walls also exist as a plant divider and bollard that separates the pedestrian area from vehicular traffic. While some stakeholders have expressed concern for loitering at fixed seating locations, the seat walls can be designed in a way that deters this behavior. There are many creative and successful strategies to do so.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee passed a motion to support the AECOM conceptual streetscape design plan, with the added request to examine the royal palm trees with a goal of removing no more than 10% to 15% of them.

### **Committee discussion**

Seth reminded the committee that this plan is a conceptual plan and would be furthered reviewed in later phases of the development stage.

Robin stated that the wrap lighting project on the 41<sup>st</sup> street corridor looked more lively and is reminiscent of Sunset Harbor, Robin stated that the Trees play a major role in the activation of 41<sup>st</sup> street. Betty Behar stated that she is in full agreement with what is being proposed in the plan regarding the additional shade and safety for tree structures.

Commissioner Meiner emphasized the importance of keeping as many palm trees on the 41<sup>st</sup> street corridor he mentioned that before he was elected into office one of the major complaints that business stakeholders and residents had was the lack of lighting within the 41<sup>st</sup> street corridor, after the wrap lighting was implemented on the corridor he has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from urban planners and residents.

Seth asked Commissioner Meiner how can this conceptual plan be moved forward without placing a arbitrary number on the plan itself since it is only in a conceptual phase. Yechiel Ciment stated that perhaps instead of asking Commissioner Meiner, the committee should ask the AECOM team if the plan would be successful without any trees being removed at the minimum.

Seth stated that he does not feel it would set a good precedent if a conceptual plan was endorsed by city staff and we chose to ignore it as an advisory committee. Seth stated that the last thing he wanted to see done is to delay his plan to next month as that would serve no purpose. Commissioner Meiner agreed that this item has great momentum and he as well does not want to see this plan be moved to next month. Commissioner Meiner

stated that the best option may be to attempt to mitigate the trees to a specific number or percentage as a compromise.

Bonnie Crabtree posed a question to Elizabeth Wheaton, City of Miami Beach Environmental and Sustainability director on whether there was a chance that out of 176 palm trees 10% of them may be removed due to them being unhealthy.

Elizabeth replied that it would be efficient for staff to examine the trees first before any number or percentage would be provided, as well as following the conceptual plan provided by AECOM

Robin stated that perhaps we take a look at tree removals on a granular block by block basis rather than taking a look at tree removals on a cumulative basis.

Maria Hernandez, City of Miami Beach General Obligation Bond program director, stated that the next phase of this project would involve taking a look at the conceptual plan on a block by block granular basis. Maria emphasized what staff is seeking from the advisory committee is to agree with a concept. Maria emphasized that the conceptual plan is already a compromise focusing on walkability space, shade and places to sit, reminding the committee that the city code is set to remove all royal palm trees.

Maria also stated that there is an opportunity to wrap lighting around shade trees. Eric Hankin and Michael Burnstine both agreed with Maria's sentiment and support the AECOM plan with further review of the seating and royal palms in the design development stage.

Michael Burnstine stated that AECOM's intent was to encapsulate to the needs of the advisory committee and community from a strategic point of view. Michael stated that their intent was not to look at which trees should be removed. Betty Behar asked Commissioner Meiner what nominal number would be needed for him to agree to the plan. Commissioner Meiner stated that a benchmark of removing no more than 10% to 15% of the trees would be a starting point.

Jeremy brought up the subject of the possibility of removing trees and how it may be harmful to the environment. Seth stated that the city code has plans to get rid of all Royal Palm trees within the City of Miami Beach and replace them with shade trees, and those changes would be an upgrade. Marcella Novella stated that she would not be proponent of fixed seating as the identity of the corridor will continue to change and the need for modular seating will be more vital as we move along.

Seth proposed a motion to approve the plan with the understanding to examine the elements of seating, parking spaces, and the possibility of removal of trees. Members of the committee did not support.

Robin stated that if we attached a possible percentage or number to the motion it would be a more favorable motion.

**MOTION:** Support the AECOM conceptual streetscape design plan, with the added request to examine the royal palm trees with a goal of removing no more than 10% to 15% of them.

**Motion made by: Bonnie Crabtree**  
**Motion seconded by: Robin Jacobs**  
**Motion Passes 8-2**

## **City Updates**

### **Outdoor Seating on 41<sup>st</sup> Street**

Gedel Merzius gave a status update on seating arrangements happening on the parking lot of 41<sup>st</sup> street and royal palm avenue. Jeremy Wachtel spoke on the Outdoor Seating arrangement as well and how it will positively impact his business and its ability to continue business during COVID restrictions.

### **Chairman Update**

Seth Gadinsky stated that 4000 Alton road development was approved by the City of Miami Beach Mast Capital is set to design an entrance feature on their garage pedestal. Seth also discussed the Roosevelt property and how the owners of the Roosevelt would like to develop the Roosevelt property with the lot behind it.

Seth also stated that CBRE has been hired by the City of Miami Beach to complete a study of the city lots around 41<sup>st</sup> street and the plans should be coming out soon.

Seth gave an update regarding the possibility of a Publix supermarket coming to the 41<sup>st</sup> street corridor. Seth stated that he is setting up a meeting between Publix representatives and Mayor Gelber about a possible development within the corridor of 41<sup>st</sup> street.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm