



Remarks by Mayor Manny Diaz Regarding Miami 21 **September 4, 2009**

Good morning, citizens of Miami, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners.

I have called this special meeting due to the tremendous outpouring of support from our constituents, and the expressed desire of several City of Miami Commissioners to revisit Miami 21.

This plan has gone before you numerous times, and last month we heard over eight hours of public testimony about the benefits of Miami 21, as well as the concerns about this plan.

I was exceptionally proud of the number of Miamians who embraced Miami 21 and was proud to sit through the debate that night. Speaker after speaker stressed the importance of sustainability, climate change, walkability, pedestrian-friendly streets, bicycling, historic preservation, open spaces, health, obesity, etc.

Speaker after speaker reflected the new Miami, a different demographic that embraces the urban experience and advocates for a very different Miami.

I also welcomed the opportunity to address many of the concerns brought up by our residents.

What we are attempting to accomplish today is not an easy task. Some will no doubt be disappointed should Miami 21 be approved.

But I assure you, a vote to support Miami 21 will be a radical departure from our city's past – a past best exemplified by the philosophy of “Build Now, Plan Later.”

The time to take this step to protect our city is now - now is the time to rid our city of a code that places the special interests over the people's interests.

Miami 21 is everyone's plan.

Miami 21 does not belong to the Mayor, the Commissioners, to staff or consultants. Miami 21 belongs to the people of Miami.

It is not a code written by lawyers and special interests that only lawyers and special interests can understand.

It is a plan written by all of the people who have participated in the over 500 public meetings and our website, with more than a quarter million unique visitors, over 4000 subscribers and 7 million hits over the past 4 years.

It is the most democratic planning document in our city's history.

The people of Miami have spoken and their voice is reflected in three important goals of Miami 21:

1. Protecting our neighborhoods- Miami 21 will bring us neighborhood zoning decisions that we all want – and that make sense.
2. Enhancing neighborhood livability- Miami 21 will enhance the qualities of neighborhoods that make them come alive, giving them a sense of community, a sense of place – like most truly great cities.
3. Achieving Environmental and Economic Stability –Ensuring a sustainable future means we must plan our city not around cars, but around our residents.

Miami 21 reflects a growing desire among our residents for a lifestyle that includes vibrant mixed-use, live-work and walkable communities with varied transit choices – a lifestyle not allowed by our existing code.

If we want our city to succeed, the status quo cannot remain.

We can no longer get by with a code that has created the hodgepodge zoning of uncertainty that we live with. We don't start today with a blank canvas. And while we are bound by these mistakes, we are not bound to inaction.

Now is the time to take a stand and protect our neighborhoods, enhance our city's sense of community, and build an economic and environmentally sustainable future.

Now is the time to pass Miami 21, for the sake of all future Miamians.

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