

Attn: City of Miami Beach
Planning Department

Re: HPB23-0569
Letter of Intent
Detailed designs for renovation of Drexel and Meridian Avenues,
Components of the Lincoln Road District Improvement Plan
501 Lincoln Road, ROW
Miami Beach, FL 33139-2913
Parcel: 9413653059ROW

03.06.2023

To whom it may concern:

Project Background

The Lincoln Road Master Plan, approved by the City of Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board in 2015 included recommendations for renovations and upgrades to Lincoln Road, as well as the district's gateway streets including Meridian and Drexel Avenues.

Following the approval of the 2015 Master Plan, between 2016 and 2020, designs were advanced and bid documents were developed for areas of Lincoln Road, from Washington to Lenox Avenues, for Meridian Avenue from Lincoln Road to 17th Street and for Drexel Avenue from 16th Street to Lincoln Lane North. The proposed designs for these areas were fully approved by the Historic Preservation Board and Planning Departments in 2017 and by regulatory agencies including the City of Miami Beach police and fire departments, public works, traffic and parking departments and Miami-Dade County's traffic department between 2019 and 2020. Following all approvals, the project's bid set was completed and delivered to the City in February 2020.

Shortly after, in March of 2020, the City of Miami Beach declared a state of emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the recommendation of the CMAR contractor regarding uncertain market conditions with the construction industry, the City agreed to postpone the bid process, in the best interest of the project.

In January 2022 the renovation scope of work was revised, based on a list of improvements outlined by City staff and approved by the City of Miami Beach Commission. The revised list of improvements is intended to minimize impacts to Lincoln Road businesses.

Revised proposed improvements include the following:

- Lincoln Road block by block improvements including selective repairs, upgrades and additions to seven Lincoln Road blocks from Washington to Lenox Avenues.
- Introduction of anti-ram bollards and a "welcoming artistic element" at the 1000 block and Alton Road intersection.

- Streetscape improvements to the district's "Gateway Streets" including sidewalk enlargements at Meridian and Pennsylvania Avenues, the pedestrianization of Drexel Avenue and a new children's play area at Euclid Avenue between Lincoln Road and Lincoln Lane North.

This application is limited to design revisions to Meridian and Drexel Avenues, intended to better harmonize with the revised Lincoln Road improvement scope.

A second application will follow, for the remainder of the areas listed above.

Historic Context

The National Register of Historic Places included the Lincoln Road Mall in its registry in 2011. This process involves the cataloguing of historic elements to recognize and document their significance and guide future treatment. Historical elements on Lincoln Road are categorized according to two general criteria: those "contributing" and others "non-contributing" to historical significance. Most of the architectural and landscape elements introduced by the Lapidus plan in the 1960s are all considered as historically fundamental to the place, and are earmarked as "contributing" in the historic registry.

The area's cross streets including Meridian and Drexel Avenues, while part of what can be considered the Historic Lincoln Road District, are not part of the National Register of Historic Places nor does the streetscape contain elements of historic significance.

That said, Lincoln Road, across its many transformations over the years, extending beyond Moris Lapidus 1960's design, has acquired a very distinctive and iconic design vocabulary we seek to extend and compliment as part of the proposed renovations for Meridian and Drexel Avenues.

Proposed Renovations for Meridian and Drexel Avenues

Proposed renovations for Lincoln Road gateway streets including Meridian and Drexel Avenues remain as originally planned and approved by the Historic Preservation Board as part of the Lincoln Road District Improvements between 2015-2017.

The design proposal for Meridian Avenue includes the enlargement of sidewalks to meet County and ADA requirements while introducing new street trees and outdoor café areas. To accomplish this, the current traffic median will be removed, traffic lanes will be re-aligned, and bike lanes will be re-introduced.

Drexel Avenue will be pedestrianized from Lincoln Lane South to Lincoln Lane North, introducing new street tree planting, outdoor café areas and an outdoor performance space with amphitheater-like seating at its intersection with Lincoln Road.

Previously proposed paving along both avenues will be revised as illustrated in the drawings to better harmonize with Lincoln Road's existing paving to remain. Both streets will carry new light posts of the same family, providing these gateway streets a new, upgraded urban environment.

Resiliency

Proposed renovations for Meridian and Drexel Avenues must meet existing conditions to remain at the intersection with Lincoln Road and other cross streets while also meeting existing finished floor elevations of a large number of storefronts that line both avenues, limiting opportunities for changing current sidewalk and roadway elevations.

That said, renovations for both avenues significantly increase tree canopy and permeable surfaces.

Proposed improvements for Meridian Avenue include 44 new trees, while at Drexel, improvements propose 42 new trees and palms in addition to large new planting beds.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isabel Castilla', written over a horizontal line.

Isabel Castilla, ASLA
Principal
James Corner Field Operations