

MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Staff Report & Recommendation

PLANNING BOARD

TO: Chairperson and Members
Planning Board

DATE: September 9, 2025

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP
Planning Director

 For TRM

SUBJECT: **PB25-0765. 1600 Washington Avenue - LDR Amendments**

PB25-0766. 1600 Washington Avenue - Comprehensive Plan Amendments

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed ordinances amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations of the City Code (LDRs), and continue the applications to the November 4, 2025, Planning Board meeting. Transmittal of the applications to the City Commission may only occur at a duly noticed second public hearing, after the conclusion of a community outreach meeting.

PLANNING BOARD AND CITY COMMISSION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The application submitted herein is in accordance with Section 7.1.10.2(a) of the LDR's, which requires the following 3-step process, prior to the review by the City Commission:

a. Step One – Planning Board Preliminary Review.

The Planning Board, at a duly noticed public hearing, shall perform an initial review of the proposed ordinance. Notice of the Planning Board preliminary review hearing shall be given in accordance with the applicable provisions in Chapter 2, Article IV of the Land Development Regulations. If the proposed ordinance involves less than ten (10) contiguous acres, the notice requirements for the preliminary Planning Board review shall also include a minimum 30-day mail notice for all properties within 375 feet of the properties subject to the proposed floor area or FAR increase, and a 30-day published notice.

Prior to the Planning Board's preliminary review stage, the Administration, either internally or with the assistance of an outside consultant, will perform an impact analysis of the proposed FAR increase; and such impact analysis shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Calculation of the actual square footage increase for affected properties such as, for example, the maximum allowable square footage for residential, office, retail, hotel or other uses resulting from the FAR increase.
2. An infrastructure analysis regarding potential impacts on traffic/mobility, parking, water, sewer, resiliency, parks and open space, as well as any other area of

concern identified by the City Commission or the Administration.

3. Massing studies, which illustrate the volume and location of the area associated with the proposed increase in FAR.

For private applications, the applicant shall be required to provide all data and exhibits related to the above noted impact analysis as part of the application submission. The findings of this impact analysis shall be presented to the Planning Board at the preliminary review stage.

b. Step Two – Community Outreach Meeting:

Subsequent to the Planning Board's preliminary review meeting, the City shall facilitate a public meeting for all affected stakeholders, in order to solicit additional input and feedback, as well as for City staff to address any outstanding issues or questions. A reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that such public meeting is held no later than 45 days from the date of the preliminary review by the Planning Board. Courtesy notice of the meeting shall be given by the applicable City department, in coordination with the Planning Department, in a manner consistent with the City's courtesy notices for other community meetings, workshops, or presentations.

c. Step Three – Planning Board Transmittal:

At a second duly noticed public hearing, which is separate and apart from the preliminary review hearing, the Planning Board shall consider and transmit the proposed ordinance to the City Commission with a recommendation. Notice of this transmittal hearing shall be given in accordance with the applicable provisions in Chapter 2, Article IV of the Land Development Regulations.

After transmittal to the City Commission, the review requires a similar 3-step process:

a. Step One – First Reading Public Hearing:

After transmittal of the ordinance by the planning board, the City Commission shall hold a first reading public hearing. Notice of the first reading shall be given in accordance with the applicable provisions in Chapter 2, Article IV of the Land Development Regulations. If the proposed ordinance involves less than ten (10) contiguous acres, the notice requirements for first reading shall also include a minimum 30-day mail notice for all properties within 375 feet of the properties subject to the proposed floor area or FAR increase, and a 30-day published notice.

b. Step Two – Community Workshop:

Subsequent to the approval of the ordinance at first reading, and prior to second reading, at least one additional community workshop, which is separate and apart from the first reading public hearing, shall be held. This additional community workshop shall be considered a courtesy meeting, and open to participation by all affected stakeholders, including residents, property owners, or businesses in the surrounding area that may be affected by the proposed floor area or FAR increase, as determined by the City Commission. Such community workshops may be held in a virtual, in-person or hybrid formats, at the discretion of the City Commission, and shall be noticed in a manner to be determined by the City Commission.

c. Step Three – Second Reading / Adoption Public Hearing:

After the community workshop described above, the City Commission shall hold a second reading public hearing to consider final adoption of the proposed ordinance. Notice of the second reading shall be given in accordance with the applicable provisions in Chapter 2, Article IV of the Land Development Regulations.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Pursuant to Section 2.4.2 of the Resiliency Code, in reviewing a request for an amendment to these land development regulations (LDRs), the board shall consider the following when applicable:

1. **Whether the proposed change is consistent and compatible with the comprehensive plan and any applicable neighborhood or redevelopment plans.**

Partially Consistent – The proposed LDR amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, as proposed to be amended.

2. **Whether the proposed change would create an isolated district unrelated to adjacent or nearby districts.**

Consistent – The proposed amendment does not create isolated districts.

3. **Whether the change suggested is out of scale with the needs of the neighborhood or the city.**

Consistent - The proposed ordinance amendment does allow for an increase in the scale of development for residential uses. The benefits to the neighborhood would outweigh the potential modest impacts of the additional height and intensity.

4. **Whether the proposed change would tax the existing load on public facilities and infrastructure.**

Partially Consistent – The proposed amendment could result in development that increases the load on public facilities and infrastructure due to the proposed change in floor area ratio (FAR). It is expected that the ordinance would result in a reduction in traffic as more people would be able to live and work in the City, as opposed to commuting from suburbs.

5. **Whether existing district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions on the property proposed for change.**

Satisfied – The boundaries of the overlay district are not illogically drawn.

6. **Whether changed or changing conditions make the passage of the proposed change necessary.**

Consistent – The loss of permanent residents and the desire to incentivize residential development makes passage of the proposed change necessary

7. **Whether the proposed change will adversely influence living conditions in the neighborhood.**

Consistent – The proposed ordinance amendment should not adversely affect living conditions in the neighborhood.

8. **Whether the proposed change will create or excessively increase traffic congestion beyond the levels of service as set forth in the comprehensive plan or otherwise affect public safety.**

Partially Consistent – The proposed change could allow for development that generates additional traffic from what is currently permitted, as the FAR is being increased. However, given that the City has seen a major increase in traffic due to workers commuting to job centers within the City from suburbs in single occupancy vehicles, the amendment has the potential to reduce traffic by allowing more residents to live in close proximity to their place of employment, as well as utilize alternative modes of transportation.

9. **Whether the proposed change will seriously reduce light and air to adjacent areas.**

Partially Consistent – The proposed change should not seriously reduce light and air to adjacent areas.

10. **Whether the proposed change will adversely affect property values in the adjacent area.**

Consistent – The proposed change should not adversely affect property values in the adjacent areas.

11. **Whether the proposed change will be a deterrent to the improvement or development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.**

Consistent – The proposed change will not be a deterrent to the improvement or development of properties in the City.

12. **Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning.**

Partially Consistent – While the property can be used in accordance with existing zoning, the proposed amendments will incentivize more residential units.

13. **Whether it is impossible to find other adequate sites in the city for the proposed use in a district already permitting such use.**

Not applicable.

COMPLIANCE WITH SEA LEVEL RISE AND RESILIENCY REVIEW CRITERIA

Section 7.1.2.4 of the LDRs establishes the following review criteria when considering ordinances, adopting resolutions, or making recommendations:

- (1) **Whether the proposal affects an area that is vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise, pursuant to adopted projections.**

Partially Consistent – The proposal does affect areas that are vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise in the long term.

(2) **Whether the proposal will increase the resiliency of the City with respect to sea level rise.**

Consistent – The proposal will increase the resiliency of the City with respect to sea level rise with new development that will comply with the City’s resiliency requirements.

(3) **Whether the proposal is compatible with the City’s sea level rise mitigation and resiliency efforts.**

Consistent – The proposal is compatible with the City’s sea level rise mitigation and resiliency efforts.

ANALYSIS

Last year the Planning Board reviewed city applications for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the LDRs for properties along Washington Avenue (from 5th Street to 17th Street) with the goal to incentivize non-transient residential uses along this corridor. The amendments included increases in the maximum allowable FAR, along with increases in the maximum allowable building height, substantial elimination of parking requirements for residential uses, and waiver of mobility fees for qualifying projects. The Planning Board transmitted these ordinances to the City Commission with favorable recommendations on November 26, 2024. On February 26, 2025, the City Commission opened and continued the ordinances to the December 17, 2025, Commission meeting.

The property located at 1600 Washington Avenue, which is the subject of the current applications, is located within the boundaries of the Washington Avenue incentive area that is part of the amendments still pending review by the City Commission. Due to the potential uncertainty in the timeframe for the pending ordinances incentivizing residential development along Washington Avenue, the property owner of 1600 Washington Avenue has filed private applications for this block of Washington Avenue.

As proposed, the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs would increase the maximum intensity (floor area ratio) to 3.25 for the CD-3 zoning district within this section of Washington Avenue. No change to the maximum density of 150 units per acre is proposed.

The following is a general summary of the proposed LDR amendment for the subject application:

- **Purpose:** To incentivize non-transient residential development along Washington Avenue
- **Conditions:** Requires conversion away from transient uses and restrictive covenants ensuring leases of at least 6 months and one day.
- **Parking Provisions:** Parking requirements are reduced or eliminated for non-transient residential uses.
- **Historic Preservation:** Certificate of Appropriateness review for projects is required.

- **Mobility Fee Waiver:** Waivers or exemptions of mobility fees for qualifying residential incentive projects.
- **Height:** The building height for eligible projects on CD-3 zoned properties is increased to up to 150 feet.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS

Per section 7.1.10.3 of the LDRs, prior to the Planning Board Preliminary Review, the Administration will perform an impact analysis of the proposed FAR increase that shall include but not be limited to, the following:

1. Calculation of the actual square footage increase for affected properties such as, for example, the maximum allowable square footage for residential, office, retail, hotel or other uses resulting from the FAR increase.
2. An infrastructure analysis regarding potential impacts on traffic/ mobility, parking, water, sewer, resiliency, parks and open space, as well as any other area of concern identified by the City Commission or the Administration.
3. Massing studies, which illustrate the volume and location of the area associated with the proposed increase in FAR.

The applicant has submitted an Impact Analysis as part of the application, with the following information:

- Potential increase of 210 residential units;
- Potential population increase of 525 people;
- Potential increase of 191 peak hour vehicle trips;
- Potential increase of 73,500 gallons of potable water consumption per day;
- Potential increase of 64,050 gallons of sanitary sewer transmission per day; and
- Potential increase of 525 tons of solid waste collection per year.

Traffic. A traffic study was prepared for the project which estimates net 88 AM peak hour vehicle trips and net 103 PM peak hour vehicle trips. This is a minor increase in peak hour vehicle trips and the current levels of service should not be severely impacted. These impacts would be offset by residents opting to walk or use transit for their commute to work, which is not accounted for. The urban core of South Beach is well served by transit and it is expected that a substantial portion of future residents will use transit or walk to commute to work.

Parks. With regards to parks levels of service, there is a deficiency in *basketball courts* and *tennis/pickleball courts*. There could also potentially be a deficiency in *activity buildings for multiple uses*. As a result of these deficiencies, each development utilizing the FAR incentives, including the subject project, will be required to pay impact and mitigations fees. The level of service for recreation and open space acreage would continue to be met.

Water. With regards to potable water consumption, on January 20, 2022, the City Commission adopted the City of Miami Beach 10-year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan and related amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. This plan was created with coordination with the South

Florida Water Management District and Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department. The plan projects that water will be available for projected population increases.

Sewer. Regarding the impacts to potable water and sanitary sewer transmission infrastructure, specific upgrades are determined on a case-by-case basis as new developments are proposed due to the significant amount development details that are required to make these determinations. The Public Works Department is currently studying the water and sewer systems throughout the city. Given only 210 residential units are enabled by this legislation, it is expected that there will be sufficient sewer capacity to accommodate the project. Otherwise, the applicant will be required to facilitate any necessary upgrades.

Solid Waste. Regarding solid waste collection, as the proposal would result in new multifamily developments, the solid waste collection would be handled by private providers. It would be the responsibility of the applicant to coordinate with the private provider and to ensure that the project's needs are met.

Urban Core Legislation - FAR Analysis

FAR BONUS REQUIRES ONLY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ABOVE THE FIRST STORY

Property	Lot Size	Base FAR (2.75) SF	FAR Bonus (3.25) SF	Net SF Increase	Maximum Density
1600 Washington Ave.*					
1601 Drexel Ave.	66,708	183,447	216,801	33,354	229.71
420 Lincoln Rd.*	84,411	232,130	274,336	17,606**	290.67
*Pacels improved with a contributing historic structure					
**420 Lincoln is a contributing historic building and already built in excess FAR; Further as a contributing historic building a rooftop addition limited to 1-story.					

MASSING STUDIES

In accordance with 7.1.10.3(a)(3) above, the applicant has submitted massing studies that represent the maximum limits of the development for the subject site.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

The proposal requires an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the proposed increase in Density.

Under Section 163.3184(2), Florida Statutes, this amendment shall follow the expedited state review process for adoption of comprehensive plan amendments. This process requires a public hearing by the local planning agency (Planning Board), a public transmittal hearing before the City Commission, after which the amendment must be transmitted to several state agencies for a 30-day review period, and a final adoption public hearing before the City Commission. The amendment is effective 31-days after it is adopted if there are no appeals.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Staff is supportive of the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the LDRs, which are largely consistent with ordinances currently pending review by the City Commission for the Washington Avenue corridor.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Board review the proposed ordinances amending the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs and continue the review of the ordinances to the November 4, 2025, Planning Board meeting. Transmittal of the applications to the City Commission may only occur at a duly noticed second public hearing, after the conclusion of a new community outreach meeting.