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## We Advocate for Residents of Miami Beach!

We are a community-based 501(c)4 not-for-profit organization providing Miami Beach residents a cohesive voice for city-wide issues that impact our quality of life. Click here to [join us!](#)



**Don't Miss Out - Make Miami Beach Count!**



## Wednesday September 30 Is The Last Day To Fill Out The Census

Filling out the completely anonymous census is key to ensuring our community gets our fair share of the resources we need for safe roads, school, infrastructure, etc. You've got the power to change your community's future by completing the 2020 Census and encouraging your family, friends and neighbors do the same. An undercounted community could miss out on billions of dollars in funding for schools, health care and job assistance each year for the next 10 years. Remember to respond using the address where you were living on April 1 and include everyone who usually lived there too, including children. [Click here to learn more](#) and [fill out the census](#) if you haven't already.

## There Are Six Referenda Items on the 2020 Ballot; These are Miami Beach United's Recommendations

(See sample ballot questions in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).)

### Marina Park Project - Questions 1, 2 and 3

**Miami Beach United recommends a "no" vote on these three ballot items** due to the flawed use of the "vacation" of Alton Road to increase the FAR for the 300 Alton Marina Park Redevelopment project. Elected officials have taken it upon themselves to decide the density/size of the tower, which we believe is a misinterpretation of the City Charter. Although there are 3 ballot questions about the project, missing is a fourth ballot question that allows the voters to decide whether the allowable FAR for this project should be increased. (FAR, or Floor Area Ratio, is the calculation used to determine the maximum allowable square footage that can be built on a particular plot of land, based on the size of that plot and the rules governing how large a building can be in that zone of the

City. For instance, if the plot of land is 10,000 square feet and the allowable FAR is 2.0, the developer could build up to 20,000 square feet.)

The Commission has resorted to this unfortunate tactic four times in recent years, and it appears to be becoming normalized, which is a terrible and dangerous precedent; what's to prevent the Commission from using this tactic of vacating a street to increase FAR for virtually any commercial development project ever proposed? The use of "vacations" by the Miami Beach Commission has grown from vacating small alleyways to more recently include major thoroughfares. The City Charter requires that increases in FAR be approved by voters, and while the City Attorney has provided an opinion that "vacations" are legal, they appear to violate the language of the charter-on FAR increases.

We are not opining on the merits of this project or the deal negotiated, but we do not support the proposed ordinance changes unless the FAR increase, upon which this project is predicated, goes before the voters. For years we have been beating this drum of the City doing an end-run around residents and the laws laid out in the Charter in order to grant additional FAR to projects as they see fit.

**Miami Beach United DOES NOT RECOMMEND voting for these three resolutions.**

### **Ordinance Authorizing Reconstruction of Original Floor Plates Within Interior Of Historic Buildings - Question 4**

**Miami Beach United recommends a "yes" vote on this item**, which gives the opportunity to restore our iconic historic buildings to their original interior layouts and floors without per-project voter approval, and allows for character-of-place adaptive re-use. For instance, a historic building that was several stories high, but which had their interior floors demolished prior to 1997 to become a nightclub, could now restore those interior floors to become office space. Legislation to encourage creative, adaptive re-use of our existing historic buildings is to be encouraged, as these buildings are significant contributors to creating the special and unique architectural feel that helps define Miami Beach. As building needs have adapted to the changing times, so too have their interior usage of space; now it is time to give those buildings the option to return to a more useful interior layout. Additionally, re-using existing buildings is a far more environmentally-friendly way to encourage thoughtful development, rather than demolishing and building something new, and working towards improved resiliency is an on-going goal of the City of Miami Beach.

**Miami Beach United RECOMMENDS voting for this resolution.**

### **Floor Area Ratio Increase from 1.5 to 3.25 for Proposed Wolfsonian Arts District - Question 5**

**Miami Beach United recommends a "yes" vote on this item**, supporting the proposed expansion of the Wolfsonian, a cultural anchor and true gem in the crown of Miami Beach. The facility already borders the troubled MXE District including Ocean Drive, and its new vision and expanded footprint will go a long way to increasing the community offerings that could be a critical component of the proposed re-imagining of Ocean

Drive/Collins/Washington as the Cultural and Arts District of Miami Beach, and help regain control of our city's brand.

Miami Beach United feels the increase in the FAR should have been limited to 3.0 and not increased to 3.25, however. Increasing the FAR to 3.0 would have provided the Wolfsonian with ample space to expand, and still remain within the 3.0 maximum permitted FAR in our zoning code for all property in the City south of 71st Street. Approving FAR increases above 3.0 could set a precedent that future developers will seek to exploit; however, since this up-zoning will be limited to a soon-to-be-created localized Wolfsonian Arts District, and will not be available to any property owner outside the Wolfsonian Arts District, Miami Beach United is supportive of the project.

Additionally, in this case, as mandated by the City Charter, Miami Beach voters are being asked whether they support the increase of the allowable FAR, (as should have been done for the Marina Park project at 300 Alton Road) and so it will be decided by the voters whether this FAR increase is warranted for a worthy not-for-profit cultural and educational institution of the caliber of the Wolfsonian.

**Miami Beach United RECOMMENDS voting for this resolution.**

## Ordinance Excluding Certain Areas Of A Building From Calculation Of "Floor Area" - Question 6

**Miami Beach United recommends a "no" vote on this item** s proposed. While the intent is a good one, as currently written, this item is too vague and could easily be manipulated by new developments, when the item was clearly proposed to help existing older buildings to retrofit their facilities to bring them up to modern needs and standards. As written, this does nothing to preclude the possibility of new developments exploiting the loopholes created herein to gain additional FAR. As we have learned, poorly written ballot items can result in significant unintended consequences with which the community is not in agreement, or didn't realize could be a possibility. A recent and glaring example of this was the request for additional FAR in North Beach Town Center, which the voters approved, but after approval, developers came back insisting that they needed yet more height in order to maximize the newly-permitted FAR.

We strongly encourage a no vote on this referendum so that the language is revised and made more precise in service of the stated goal: to help existing older buildings retrofit themselves for today's needs. Once that happens, it should go back to the voters in the next election (in the 2021 Commission election) to be voted upon and approved. This is precisely what is happening with ballot item #4, regarding restoring historic buildings' floor plates, which had originally been proposed in 2019 as being too vague; it has been tightened up and reintroduced to the voters and we expect this time around it will pass.

**Miami Beach United DOES NOT RECOMMEND voting for this resolution.**

**Your Voice Matters - Voter Information**



## Information about Voter Registration and Early Voting

### **October 5 Is The LAST DAY To Register To Vote**

You can register on line, in person, or via mail. [Click here](#) to get more information and register.

### **October 24 Is The LAST DAY To Request A Vote By Mail Ballot**

However, it is not recommended to wait that long to request a VBM Ballot, so if you are interested in this option, request it ASAP via this [link](#).

### **Early Voting in Miami Beach Will Take Place October 19 Through November 1**

See detailed information about schedules, locations, and ballot drop boxes information in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

### **Election Day is Tuesday, November 3**

More information about voting on Election Day can be found [here](#).

### **Much More information**

- Detailed information about voting, including an explanation of the Ballot Questions, in English and in Spanish, is available [here](#).
- Information about COVID-19 safety precautions is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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**Our Mission** Dedicated to improving the quality of life for Miami Beach residents, managed and measured growth of our city, and ethical leadership of government – for a vibrant city rooted in history, its people, resources and neighborhoods, with focus on the future – by providing educational and analytical focus on the organization, structure, policies and performance of Miami Beach government. We share our newsletters with over 8000 subscribers, 75% of whom are registered Miami Beach voters.