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## **Miami's Downtown Development Authority Kinda-Sorta Approves Miami 21**

Please excuse the tardiness of this post, but a couple of days ago the Miami Herald reported the Downtown Development Authority gave conditional approval to Miami 21. For those of you who aren't familiar with the plan, Miami 21 is Mayor Diaz's attempt to leave his mark on the city for decades to come. Basically, the plan calls for a revamping of Miami's byzantine zoning code, in favor of a more form based code increasing density and generally making the city more pedestrian friendly a la NYC. For one, I am a big fan of Miami 21, I believe it will shape this city into a more functional and less auto-centric community. However, I said the authority gave conditional approval. What conditions you may ask? Most of the recommendations are obviously to satiate the developers' lobby. Here are some of the recommendations:

Provide protection for existing structures from casualties such as hurricanes. This basically grants owners of buildings under the old code to rebuild in the event of a hurricane or other disasters of the like.

Permits approved under the current zoning code must be honored.

Automatic extensions for existing development permits and approvals to six years from the code's adoption, these extensions would be unlimited but subject to approval by the city commission.

Provide details on the methods used by the city to calculate fees under the plan's public benefits program. Development bonuses in capacity or height pay a fee for the bonuses approved by the city.

Grandfathering uses deemed appropriate under the current code as appropriate under Miami 21.

Allow buildings which don't meet the current code to be expanded as long as non-conforming elements are not augmented as well.

To keep the existing language the same, so as not to confuse the developers.

Many of these recommendations seem fair enough. To be honest, I just want this code to pass already. We missed implementing the code during the building boom, we can't lose any more time on this. Miami 21 will change the City of Miami for the better, but we need to pass it first. I trust the city commission will realize the foresight of this plan, and pass it without delay. But then, this is Miami, is it ever that easy?

Now if we can only get the Streetcar proposal moving again.