

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-2
July 1, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez (Absent)

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-2 [3:36 p.m.]

Discussion regarding the removal of Miracle Mile Pavers at crosswalks
(Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: Moving on, F-2.

City Attorney Suarez: This one's yours Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So, after years of discussion with the Manager, I laugh because this is an item that we have not agreed on.

Vice Mayor Anderson You're both laughing.

Mayor Lago: Not agreed on, but I think that I finally beat him down. I think I got him. This is a \$200,000 a year cost, am I correct, the budget was around that, correct. What is it Hermes? Mr. Diaz.

Public Works Director Diaz: It varies, but you're not wrong.

City Commission Meeting
July 1, 2025

Mayor Lago: Okay. Around there. I want to give credit where credit is due. The Manager has tried everything to not throw in the yellow, the white tiles, excuse me. We've tried a 12-inch slab to try to hold up the pavers, we've tried different setting systems. I've been there with him. I was there when the Manager and I started the project when we basically started removing the asphalt, it was ten years ago, I think, eight years ago, I can't remember the exact date. It looks beautiful, but it doesn't make sense. The amount of maintenance, the amount of work, to make sure that these crosswalks maintained, its not economically feasible, and not only that, when you have to maintain them, you literally are in the middle of construction on Miracle Mile, and it pains me to say it, but when I see something like this that we are just throwing money, good money at bad, there is not way, we've tried everything to engineer a way where those pavers can handle the load. There is no way. When you are talking about trucks, garbage trucks, construction, when you are talking about heavy-duty vehicles, it pains me to say it, we have to remove these pavers and we've got to just go to some sort of paint, asphalt, concrete. I leave that up to the Manager. There is just no way. It's unfeasible financially to continue doing this. I think we lost this battle. Madam Vice Mayor, anything you'd like to add.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I concur. Women's heels getting stuck between the grooves, they are trip hazards is continuous. So, yes, when it comes to crosswalks, no pavers please, ever.

Mayor Lago: Oh, I thought you were done. I think the City Attorney would be very happy because it limits our liability and I've been there where I've seen multiple people fall. Pavers are a mess.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: I myself have fallen. One of my heels got stuck in one of the pavers crossing Miracle Mile. I'm just not completely satisfied with – this is the heart of our downtown, these crosswalks. I'm not satisfied with the alternative that we are probably exploring. I don't think it's very eye appealing, especially given it's the center of our downtown. I do think something needs to be done. I don't know if there is any way to consider something else than just putting asphalt.

Mayor Lago: Are you done.

Commissioner Castro: Yes. I'm done.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, the Manager and I have been discussing this for years, we've brought this up. I think the DCM will tell you, because I copy him on text messages every day, I deal with all issues facing the community. How many times have we talked about this. We have done everything we possibly can, from a 12-inch slab that was installed. We have tried to find every solution possible. Do you have a solution. I'm open for anybody to come forward with a solution. I've asked, and with all due respect, if Peter and the DCM cannot figure out a solution, I don't

*City Commission Meeting
July 1, 2025*

know of anybody that can, because it's not the infrastructure, it's the paver. The paver cannot handle the load. It's a stress on the paver, and again, I have all faith in Mr. Diaz, we've been working together for a long time, he's a straight shooter. Do you see anything that will actually work. We've been talking about this for a while. Do you see any option that we haven't exhausted already to address this issue.

Public Works Director Diaz: Nothing that will mimic those pavers. There is a plethora of products you can put out there, but those pavers, and the Manager and I have had that discussion, the pavers are very brittle and on top of that because they are not really construction pavers, so they are not interlocking.

Mayor Lago: They are floating.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, it's a combination of both those things. There are other things, but they are not going to match the pavers.

Mayor Lago: The reason why I bring that up is because, just like the windows here, we have to eventually take action. We have to stop. They have to move on. Somebody is going to get hurt. We talk about wanting to avoid liability, someone has to move forward. If you are in a wheelchair, if you are a person with a cane, you are an elderly person, this is a nightmare. Again, I don't want to do this, trust me. Its not going to be the most – to remove the pavers, again, it goes against the aesthetic of the project.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: May I suggest that there are other things we can do to beautify the Mile other than pavers, because most people walk looking straight up, not looking straight down, because you need to look at where you are going. You can do lighting, you can do decorations, we can activate more things, lots of different considerations. I will hand that over to our esteemed staff to make suggestions, put it through the boards, if necessary, as to be the best solution that will both attract shoppers and make the Mile beautiful.

Mayor Lago: So, one of the things that I wanted to add on to this, because we are going to bring it back to the Commission with a directive in August is, I'm not taking this money, this \$200,000 a year away from Miracle Mile. I want to inject that money back into the Mile in line with what the Vice Mayor was saying. We were talking about that with the Manager and the team with the agenda. I don't want to take the money away from it. Let's use that money. Let's do something beautiful, landscaping, in which Deena has done an amazing job with landscaping. By the way, the clock is back, we fixed the rust. Can we make sure that when they are watering the plants they are not over-watering, and the clock even gets more water on top of it. Thank you. So, my point is

*City Commission Meeting
July 1, 2025*

that staff by the next Commission meeting can come back with ideas on what to spend the money on. We don't have to spend it all. We can spend the money on – back to the General Fund, but if you tell me, hey Vince, we want to hang some planters, you want to do some of this, you want to do some of that, you want to try to beautify some electrical; some electrical that's there. For example, on Ponce, if you see some exposed electrical that we've been removing slowly, maybe we can spend the money to get that all taken care of. If you look in front of Suchi Machi there are some planters there that are awful, they are covered with asphalt. Maybe we cut that section out and redo it and make it look beautiful. It's in front of the salad place. I've sent you photos of that many, many times. So, Mr. Clerk, I'd like to put this on the agenda for the next Commission meeting with action and for the Manager's team to put together something to spend that money on and we can have it reoccurring for projects like, let's address the sidewalk, which is broken, let's do this planter, let's put these trees. Something that again continues to beautify since we are taking away from these crosswalks. If you told me in August when we come back, Vince, I have an idea for the crosswalks, we can save them. I'm willing to listen, but you are not going to find a paver that matches that, that's stronger. These are brittle pavers. It's impossible. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. They are very brittle. Brittle material is like that. I'm not surprised they have a...load issue, where they are continuously pounded and whereas that problem is not a problem on the sidewalk or on the parking areas. So, what we can do is in August, bring back various, let's look at what alternatives we have, other than those pavers, and we can present to the Commission so that we can see. We are going to look at all the options there and see. But I do think it's a material issue. We tried everything, we tried to minimize stress on them, but it's a brittle material and brittle materials tend to be subject to...load, its that continuous pounding, its trucks and cars and everything move through it. It pains me to say that as you know.

Mayor Lago: If we could work with the Manager, your team, the Commission, speak with my colleagues, speak with Belkys, the ACM, the DCM, Ms. Bell, whoever has any input in regard to Miracle Mile and downtown and say, what can we do with this \$200,000. Put together a little budget. I just gave you an example, in front of the salad place, that sidewalk looks horrible; the alleyway behind Hillstones. You could do something with that money. You could attack two or three nice projects a year to really address issues, and I think over a few years you can really address some issues that I think are affecting that we've kind of not addressed, because we have bigger fish to fry. Is that fine. Do you need action.

City Manager Iglesias: We will bring it back in August and we'll look at different alternatives and different things that we could do at that crosswalk, and we'll do a presentation to the Commission.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk, please put it on the agenda.

