

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Pocket Item
December 9, 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
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Government Affairs Director, Chelsea Granell

Public Speaker(s)

Pocket Item
Legislative Priorities Update

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor, the floor is yours. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, our Government Affairs Director, Chelsea Grannell, accompanying us on the trip to Tallahassee and has prepared a beautiful memo giving the highlights of that trip. And I'd like to give her an opportunity to present what we were able to accomplish.

Government Affairs Director: Thank you, Vice Mayor. Appreciate that. Good evening, Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners. As Vice Mayor mentioned, I'm Chelsea Grannell, the Government Affairs Director. On December 8th, I circulated a memo summarizing our trip. And today I'd like to briefly recap our highly productive visit to Tallahassee. Sorry, I had to catch my breath. I was running up here. Our delegation, Vice Mayor Anderson, Commissioner Lara, and myself met with approximately a dozen key legislators across the House, Senate, and Executive Branch. We advanced our appropriations, elevated our policy priorities, and strengthened critical

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[Date]

1

relationships. It was clear throughout these meetings that Coral Gables is viewed as a well-prepared city, and we were commended on several occasions for protecting and maintaining our reserves and remaining fiscally responsible. I'm also pleased to report that all six of our appropriation projects have been sponsored and filed by Senator Ileana Garcia and Representative Demi Busara. During our meetings, we discussed several major city priorities, including environmental and water quality funding, tree canopy protection, transportation and mobility improvements, school bus safety, micromobility and electric bike safety, and the importance of protecting public safety services in any statewide fiscal change. Property tax reform was the most discussed topic. For the most part, the Senate and the House have divided perspectives. Legislators emphasize that the Governor has directed that a decision has to be made this session. The Senate favors a phased approach, and police and fire services are expected to be protected. We, the delegation, reiterated our concerns regarding long-term revenue reductions and their potential impact on essential municipal services. One of the greatest strengths of this trip was our coordination with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, which fully supported our 2026 legislative priorities and helped amplify our shared message. Together, we had a consistent message, and we worked collaboratively to speak to legislators with regard to what our asks were. I want to thank our state legislators for taking the time to meet with us, specifically Chamber President Jorge Arrizurrieta and the Chamber leadership that went with us on this trip. But I would especially like to take this time to thank the Vice Mayor, Vice Mayor Anderson, and Commissioner Lara for their incredible leadership. They really did have a strong voice up there, and for their advocacy and representation of our residents were very much well heard. So, thank you for that. And I also wanted to thank our Communications team, like Martha Pantin, for their collaboration in producing this very beautiful legislative brochure, which has now become the standard for many people who would love to also produce something similar. So, I just wanted to summarize this by saying that our trip, I thought, along with the delegation, that it was very successful. It strengthened our partnership, positioned the city in a very good place for this coming session. And I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mayor Lago: First and foremost, I'd like to thank you, the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Lara, for doing an amazing job. I've spoken to the Speaker of the House. I've also spoken to multiple State Reps and Senators. I'm actually meeting with them for coffee and for breakfast in the next few days. They all spoke amazingly in regard to the work that all of you did, along with the Chamber, and they were very gracious about having the City of Coral Gables. And I'm happy that Commissioner Lara touched upon it, and the Vice Mayor touched upon it, and you touched upon it in your memo about the issues of fiscal responsibility and being very thoughtful and being very careful. And just the fact that we rehabilitated ourselves to a certain extent after the actions that were taken after this recent election. But that was front of mind, front and center for individuals like Brian Avila, Senator Brian Avila, Speaker of the House, members like Speaker, excuse me, Representative Porras, Rizzo, Garcia, these were individuals who are very, very fiscally sound.

They believe in the Constitution. They believe in understanding and putting residents first. And they were very clear to deliver a message that they're proud of the position that the Coral Gables is in and the position that we're taking. So, I wanted to thank all of you for doing that work, and I apologize for missing the time that I was there. I had a business meeting that I couldn't miss.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I want to highlight one more item on there. And each and every individual that we met with, including Lieutenant Governor, very much recognized and appreciated the fact that we have this ballot item coming in April.

Mayor Lago: That's one of the things you also mentioned. I forgot to mention that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It was critical that we do this. So just be mindful of that. You know, the impact of doing opposite messaging will have a negative impact on our appropriations requests. I could see that in the future. So, in order to represent residents, the best, we have to give them the choice to be able to vote and do a good job of making sure we make it easy for them. And I thank again our Alina Garcia for everything that she's done to facilitate us in this process.

Mayor Lago: Senator Garcia has been an incredible advocate, and she's always doing the best that she can on behalf of the city. And one of the things that she mentioned to me was the IG was critical for, you know, restoring a little bit of respect and dignity in regard to certain decisions we have made in the past. So, I thought it was very important that that came out.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor, quick question. Do we have sponsors for all our appropriations?

Government Affairs Director: Yes. So, all six of our appropriations have been sponsored on the Senate side by Senator Ileana Garcia and State Rep Demi Busara. Not only do we have sponsors, but during our trip, we talked about our policy priorities. And regardless of whether or not the legislators we met with sponsored our items, there was a great appetite for a lot of the policies that we as a city have passed. One of them, I believe, was school bus safety, in addition to environmental ones as well. I know the Vice Mayor did a really good job at spearheading specific policies that she was interested in as well as Commissioner Lara.

Mayor Lago: All right. Well, thank you very much. Great work. Great work.

Government Affairs Director: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, the memo is very comprehensive. Well done. Well done memo on behalf of all of you. Thank you.