

BILTMORE REGENT CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

721 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134

March 13, 2019

Mayor and Commissioners  
City of Coral Gables  
City Hall

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

As owners and residents of a multi-unit condominium apartment building on the Biltmore Way corridor, we are requesting that the (NRP) Neighborhood Renaissance Program project for our street not only be afforded the highest priority but that residents participate fully and with a meaningful role in developing the specifications and design for this transformational project.

**Sustainability**

Biltmore Way has the potential to become a model urban streetscape, encouraging "walkability," a critical feature of a sustainable city. In its current condition, without canopy trees, the sidewalks offer no shade and the corridor is substantially warmer than surrounding areas. The extra wide street, along with the usual contributors, results in an urban heat island in the midst of a residential neighborhood. As you are no doubt aware, scientists have long known that cities tend to be hotter than rural areas, partly because concrete buildings and asphalt roads absorb heat and because of waste heat from cars and air-conditioners. This "urban heat island" effect can raise local temperatures by two to five degrees Fahrenheit on average.

The lack of shade and higher temperatures not only discourage residents from walking to the downtown center but it increases energy use, from air conditioning and short haul automobile trips. This adds unnecessarily to traffic congestion and parking in municipal garages already challenged due to the redesign of Miracle Mile.

**Safety**

In addition to these sustainability concerns, the danger to residents from speeding cars, lack of marked and lighted pedestrian crossing zones, use of sidewalks by bicyclists, multiple lanes at crossing zones, make this active pedestrian thoroughfare a safety hazard. The street encourages vehicular speeding, making pedestrian crossing difficult and unsafe, as well as, creates a dangerous condition for autos exiting the numerous garages or crossing the street from the perpendicular cross streets.

### **Suggested Resolution**

We are interested in a modest renovation of the streetscape (dissimilar to Miracle Mile) that will require a short period of construction, with a focus on these critical resident concerns:

1) Large shade canopy trees of mostly native, salt water tolerant species to be planted in or along the sidewalks to provide shade and screening from harmful UV rays.

2) Retention of ALL existing parking spaces, in their current configuration. Flooding will be an increasing challenge for the City and particularly for buildings on Biltmore Way with underground garages. For this reason, on street parking spaces must be retained not only for their current usage by residents, guests, caregivers and service companies, but also as an emergency plan for moving cars from garages to the street prior to a severe storm or flooding.

In addition, as more families welcome home adult children, the number of cars per unit will rise rather than decline. The loss of even one space will cause serious issues on Biltmore and within adjacent neighborhoods where these cars will necessarily overflow.

3) Removal of all parking meters and replacement with parking machines.

4) Traffic calming features that would reduce speeding on the street. While we do not propose a median, we would consider one only if the sidewalk trees take precedent and the configuration of the street to accommodate a median doesn't result in fewer parking spaces or interfere with entering or exiting buildings and garages.

5) Implementation of green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and stormwater management.

6) Vetting design suggestions with stakeholders, residential owners and renters, as well as commercial property owners, at a stage when changes can be assimilated into the design plan.

It goes without saying, that all residents and you as our elected representatives want to see a streetscape project that reflects the most current design criteria available in this day of climate challenges such as warmer temperatures, sea level rise and flooding. Coral Gables should be a leader in providing sustainability and environmental benefits while continuing the historic tradition of a generous tree canopy across the City Beautiful.

We would appreciate your commitment to these goals and your interest in moving this project forward without further delay. There is wisdom in this old Chinese proverb: ***"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."***

Sincerely,



Juan Larrain, President  
Biltmore Regent Condominium Association

Copies to:

Peter Iglesias, City Manager  
Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager  
President, Gables Plaza Condominium Association  
President, Biltmore II Condominium Association, Inc.  
President, The David Williams Condominium Association  
President, Avignon in the Gables Condominium Association

BILTMORE WAY - 600 AND 700 BLOCKS - INVENTORY

BUILDING	ADDRESS	UNITS	RESIDENTS	CARS	ON SITE PARKING	
					UNDER SURFACE	TOTAL
David Williams	700	192 (R)	300 (est)	275 (est)	142**	46*** 188
		3 (C)	#employees/clients unknown	?		
Biltmore Regent	721	23	43	43	23	23 2H 4 guest
Multi family rental	719	12*	24 (est)	24	0	12 12
Biltmore II	600	236	470-708 (2-3 per unit) avg 589	470—708 avg 589	337	83 420
Multi family rental	738	4	8 (presently unoccupied)	8 (projected)	0	8. 8
Beatrice Row (fronts BW and Anderson)	744	9 townhomes	18 (est)	18	0	18 18 (surface garages)
Gables Plaza	625	91	150	135 (est)	98	26 125 1H
Avignon (fronts BW, Coral Way, 2 H Anderson)	2401 Anderson	20	42-60 (est) avg. 51	42-60 (est) avg 51	42	5 49
Junior League	713	office	? Staff	?		1H 1H
Biltmore Village	711	16	32 (est)	24 (approx)	12	10 24 2H

BILTMORE WAY - 600 AND 700 BLOCKS - INVENTORY

Biltmore Village	671	17	34 (est)	25 (approx)	12	13	25
<b>TOTALS</b>	11	620 (R) 3 (C) 1 (O)	1,249	1,192	666	256	922

H=handicapped  
R=residential  
C=commercial  
O=office

NOTE: 1) One development is in the review process (701-711 Valencia) plus a second development is anticipated in the 700 block of Va encia. With limited on-street parking on Valencia, and no on-street parking on Anderson, visitor, employee, and service vehicles will overflow to side streets and Biltmore Way. In addition, 719 Biltmore Way is listed for sale with the potential of increased # of units, residents, and cars.

- 2) Beatrice Row townhouses front BW and Anderson, with no on-street parking (the city eliminated 6 spaces in front of the BW entrance to add landscaping to enhance the development). Visitors and service vehicles are parking in the alley, blocking entrances to individual surface garages.
- 3) The Avignon wraps around BW, Anderson, and Coral Way, with no on-street parking fronting the building.
- 4) 738 BW is currently unoccupied. When renovation is completed, on-street parking spaces in front of the building will be utilized by their visitors, workers and service vehicles. Presently, vehicles from other buildings are parking in the building's on-site spaces.
- 5) Emergency conditions (underground garage flooding, storms) require relocation to on-street parking spaces. 150 cars were relocated for 3 weeks from the flooded David William garage; during the COVID lockdown almost every on-street parking space was taken.

\* 6) potential 21 units

\*\* 7) 152 less approx 10 spaces being used for pumps = 142 spaces available in underground garage

\*\*\* 8) some may be used for management/staff

**BILTMORE WAY - 600 AND 700 BLOCKS - INVENTORY**

- 9) A sizable portion of the population is elderly and require caregivers and medical services (nurse visits, labs)  
This demand for on-street parking is in addition to guests, service companies, and residents who do not have on-site parking.