

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



TO: City Commission

FROM: Commissioner Melissa Castro

DATE: October 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Highlights from the First FLC Development / Code Compliance / Redevelopment Committee Meeting

As Vice Chair, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Florida League of Cities' Development, Code Compliance, & Redevelopment Committee. Below are key takeaways and an update for Coral Gables, our residents, and neighboring municipalities.

The meeting began with remarks by David Cruz, Legislative Counsel for the Florida League of Cities, who outlined the purpose of the committee: to identify emerging issues, shape legislative priorities, and defend Home Rule the right of local governments to govern themselves.

I opened by emphasizing the importance of ensuring that local decision-making remains in the hands of municipalities, not preempted by Tallahassee mandates that disregard the unique needs of our communities.

The chair, Commissioner Chris Fuller, reiterated that the group's work this year would center around identifying one Legislative Priority and one Policy Position, which will eventually be adopted by the full League at its annual legislative conference.

Major Topics Discussed

1. Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs)

David Cruz reviewed the legislation filed last session that would have prohibited new CRAs, set a 2050 sunset for existing ones, and barred new projects after October 1 unless already bonded. Several members, including myself, voiced concern about how this would cripple local revitalization.

I highlighted that CRAs are often the only mechanism smaller cities have to reinvest in blighted or under-served areas. Other members echoed the need for the League to make protecting CRAs a top priority again this year, since similar legislation is expected to resurface in the House.

Consensus: The committee agreed to recommend that preserving CRA authority remain a key League priority.

2. Affordable Housing & the Live Local Act

The discussion then shifted to SB 1730, the latest update to the Live Local Act.

Staff summarized that while the law is well-intentioned, many municipalities are struggling with its practical implementation particularly where height, density, and parking are being dictated by state statute rather than local context.

I raised the question of how cities can maintain architectural standards and neighborhood compatibility without being accused of impeding affordable housing. Several members, including those from coastal and historic cities, expressed similar concerns about preserving local character.

David Cruz confirmed that no “Live Local II” bill is planned yet, but legislators are watching implementation closely and could make adjustments next session. Members agreed to document specific examples of conflicts or challenges to bring back at the next meeting.

3. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Staff briefed us on a newly filed bill that would require every city and county to allow ADUs by right by December 1, 2026. The proposal removes the ability to require owner occupancy and mandates that ADUs be rented for a minimum of 30 days, effectively distinguishing them from short-term rentals.

I asked about infrastructure impacts and enforcement challenges, especially for neighborhoods that already face parking and drainage issues. Several members noted the lack of clarity on utility hookups, stormwater impacts, and code enforcement mechanisms.

Consensus: The committee agreed that while ADUs can be part of the affordable housing toolbox, the League should advocate for flexibility allowing cities to tailor rules based on infrastructure capacity and community input.

4. Emerging “YIMBY” Proposals

Staff also previewed several early-stage “Yes In My Backyard” (YIMBY) draft bills circulating among housing advocates. These would override local zoning to allow higher-density housing statewide including reducing lot sizes, setbacks, and parking requirements, and allowing multi-story “starter homes” by right.

I expressed concern that these one-size-fits-all approaches undermine context-sensitive planning. Others agreed that while addressing housing affordability is critical, cities should retain authority to determine where and how growth occurs.

5. Impact Fees & Infrastructure Funding

David Cruz provided an overview of SB 1080, which now limits how cities can increase impact fees and requires unanimous local approval for major hikes. Several members, including myself, noted that impact fees are not profit tools, but essential for ensuring that growth pays for growth and taxpayers aren't subsidizing private development.

It was recommended that the League consider making impact fee flexibility part of its advocacy platform this year. The sentiment in the room was clear: local governments must be allowed to fund infrastructure responsibly without new restrictions from the state.

6. Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

The group revisited the 2024 veto of SB 280, which would have transferred regulatory power over vacation rentals to the state. While no new STR bill is filed yet, members agreed that this issue remains a recurring battle.

I shared the perspective that residents' quality of life including noise, parking, and neighborhood preservation must remain the central focus when crafting any state policy on rentals.

7. Platting & Replatting Reforms (SB 784)

Staff highlighted the recent SB 784 law requiring administrative approval of plats and replats. Members raised questions about the practical application who within city staff qualifies as the "administrative authority," and how smaller cities with limited staff will meet the new seven-day notice and review requirements.

I noted that while streamlining is positive, cities need clear implementation guidance to avoid liability or unintended procedural lapses.

8. Committee Direction & Next Steps

Toward the close of the meeting, Chair Fuller asked members to submit written proposals for the committee's top Legislative Priority and Policy Position before the next meeting on October 17. I encouraged colleagues to share concrete examples of how these laws Live Local, SB 784, SB 1080 are affecting their cities, so our advocacy can be backed by real-world data.

Key Themes & Takeaways

- **Preserve Home Rule:** Every discussion underscored the importance of keeping planning and zoning decisions local.
- **Defend CRAs:** The committee strongly favored protecting redevelopment tools and opposing sunset provisions.
- **Promote balanced housing solutions:** Support Live Local's goals but seek legislative adjustments to restore local discretion on design, parking, and compatibility.
- **Push back on preemptions:** Watch for ADU and YIMBY bills that limit municipal authority.
- **Ensure fair infrastructure funding:** Advocate for impact fee flexibility and oppose measures that shift costs to taxpayers.