



January 16, 2012

Dear Miami-Dade Mayor, Miami-Dade Commissioners, City of Miami Mayor, City of Miami Commissioners, Miami-Dade County Legislative Delegation, Co-Sponsors of the Destination Gaming Bill, Florida Senate President and Florida House of Representatives Speaker,

Early in 2011, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County created a (separate/independent) non-profit neighborhood planning and development entity, called the Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation. The purpose of the entity is to provide leadership and focus for a critical aspect of Arsht Center's mission: to help create and sustain a vibrant and attractive urban setting to secure both the Arsht Center's future and that of the surrounding community.

With a small group of colleagues, Mike Eidson (current Arsht Center chair), former City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, Parker Thomson (former Arsht Center chair) and Dan Bell, (current chair of the Miami Science Museum), we engaged world-class architects/planners (Pelli Clarke Pelli, original Arsht Center architect) and transportation engineers (VHB/MillerSellen of Boston, globally experienced urban transportation experts) whose charge was to craft the possibilities for long-term neighborhood development.

After several months of work, we began to articulate principles that would guide our long-term actions. This past summer, our focus on the long-term was drawn to Resorts World Miami destination resort casino proposal. In order to react intelligently, we concluded that it was important, first, to gather all of the available information necessary to help guide our planning process.

First, Arsht Center is part of a larger neighborhood. Neighborhoods are about *connectivity* and don't exist as islands in the city. They are attractive, unique places connected to the rest of the city via bicycle and pedestrian paths, parks and open space, public transit systems and well-functioning street networks.

Second, as a vital component of a thriving neighborhood, Arsht Center and its needs (for parking, safe and active streets, expansion space) *must be accommodated*. To us, the best place to do this is in the largely vacant land west of the center, what we call Miami's "Town Square". As we focus on this area, Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation is committed to work with private property owners, community groups and government in a collaborative way so that the most far-reaching benefits for Arsht Center and the broader community can be achieved.

Finally, we must *codify a plan* for Town Square that presents, in detail, how private and public investment could be directed so as to create a neighborhood, and not a loose collection of islands. The "Special Area Plan" concept of the new Miami 21 zoning code is an essential tool to help achieve these broad neighborhood development goals.

Grounded in these principles, our design and engineering team dug into the original Resorts World Miami proposal, in particular, and the destination resort casino concept, in general. While we look forward to ongoing planning and development dialogue with any and all neighborhood stakeholders, we think it is very

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important for Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, at this point, to communicate the preliminary findings of our analysis. After all, far-reaching legislation is making its way through the Florida Legislature as we speak, and we need to express our views in a timely fashion to have an impact on the legislative process.

We know (from industry-accepted statistical models employed by our transportation consultants to predict traffic generation based on casino floor size) that destination resort casinos generate significant vehicular traffic. While the Resorts World Miami casino floor size is not yet finalized, Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation has a keen eye focused on the incremental demands that such a casino will place on our regional and local transportation system.

Prior to the Resorts World Miami proposal, our regional transportation system (the I-395/SR-836/I-95 area) had been scheduled for a reconstruction of roughly \$750 million or more (a 2009 Florida Department of Transportation estimate of construction and right-of-way costs) within the next decade. But we now know that this reconstruction plan may already be obsolete for the needs of just one large destination resort casino in addition to the growth we want to see in Town Square neighborhood. Further, there will also be material costs associated with upgrading the local street network (Bayshore Boulevard, for instance).

Parking needs for car-based destination resort casinos are also significant. While parking is a critical element of Town Square's future, we have a serious concern that casino resort parking demand could overwhelm the neighborhood. To prevent this, the neighborhood needs a detailed, forward-looking mass transit and car-demand management strategy. Like roadways, these initiatives also require significant amounts of capital.

In our opinion, destination resort casino proposals cannot be considered without a clear understanding of how the attendant transportation and transit needs will be funded and implemented. Government has also recognized this in their recent appeals to Tallahassee for a more considered and detailed evaluation of legislative proposals. Miami, a world-class city, deserves a world-class planning effort.

In the coming months, Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation looks forward to a dialogue with our neighbors—landowners, public sector agencies, and community groups—as to their specific plans and how, working together, the Miami community can achieve something larger than the sum of our individual aspirations.

Sincerely,

Armando Codina
Town Square Neighborhood Development Corporation Chair