

The Awful Truth About Miami 21



In Erik Bojnansky's "[Zoned Out](#)" (January 2020), Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk says: "It was not the intention to be enabling wholesale upzoning." That claim is totally disingenuous.

Many of us contested parts of the Miami 21 zoning plan on the basis that it was upzoning almost the entire city. Special Area Plans (SAP) were only the worst example.

I lobbied strongly to show that in all the neighborhood categories, one could build more under Miami 21 than the old code. Plater-Zyberk [principal architect of Miami 1] strongly denied this. She and others claimed that those of us questioning Miami 21 were misunderstanding it, misconstruing its enlightened thinking, and against progress.

Many opponents argued the plan's affordable housing element was lip service with no teeth, a joke. We insisted the city needed more parks and better infrastructure. I argued that the city lacked decent mass transit, or a solid funding plan for it.

Plater-Zyberk's plan clearly was enabling huge upzoning, without addressing any of these issues. All of today's SAP areas were upzoned by Miami 21 years before property owners submitted their applications. It's why developers bought those parcels in the first place -- to convert them to SAPs.

Plater-Zyberk's recent claim that maybe one shouldn't be able to upzone within SAPs ignores that her plan allows variances for huge upzoning now, anyway, in almost all areas -- just more slowly than SAPs allow.

For a shocking example of the difference between the old and new code generally, next time you're on the Julia Tuttle heading west from the Beach, look south at Edgewater's skyline. The super-sized buildings you see were built under Miami 21. Pre-Miami 21 high-rises (even from only a decade ago) are dwarfed in height and footprint, quaint by comparison.

Maybe if Plater-Zyberk was more concerned with the city functioning better, rather than, as she says, "making the city a better form," there'd be more affordable housing; less flooding in the super-high-rise areas; more, not less, green space in our existing parks, more parks overall, and much more public access to the waterfront access.

Initially, DPZ promised a comprehensive plan, where every city block was supposedly analyzed for a near-perfect city-fit. So perfect, we were promised, it would be the opposite of our old plan -- trashed for allowing variances. Then came SAPs, incongruent from the start, since they suddenly allowed ever-ballooning upzoning -- mini-cities overlaid on this supposedly near-perfect, just rezoned city.

What started as applicable to only a few areas, became an option for *any* nine-plus-acre plot citywide -- then even under nine acres.

Issues like transit, environmental hazards, and affordable housing are clearly more pressing today, and these problems won't go away by just eliminating SAPs. They are just mini-versions of what's wrong with our citywide zoning code.

Richard Strell
Edgewater

More Good Press for Allapattah -- and It's About Time...

Thanks for Janet Goodman's write-up on one of our local parks here in Allapattah ("A [llapattah'](#)

[s Place to Be](#)

," January 2020).

As a 45-year, born-and-raised resident of Allapattah, I love the fact my community is receiving so much good attention.

One addition I'd like to make is that the reason many still refer to the park as Comstock Park is because that's its former name. The land where the park and school sit were donated to the city by the Comstock family back in the 1950s or 1960s.

Again, thanks for the great piece. I'll be sure to share with neighbors and friends.

Pat Gajardo
Allapattah

Eye on Miami: Perfect Vision

Nancy Lee is one of the best political writers in Florida. Please keep her stories coming.

Dewey Steele
Redland

Correction

Letters February 2020

Written by BT Readers
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In Helen Hill's story "That's a Wrap" (January 2020), the number of galleries represented at Design Miami/ 2019 was mistakenly reported as 13. The correct number was 33.