

**FIU Proposal Summary to Advise, Structure and Organize**  
**Miami Beach's Long-term Inspirational Resiliency Vision Campaign**  
**Process**

*DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION*

**To:** Chief Resilience Officer, City of Miami Beach

**From:** Florida International University's Extreme Events Institute, Sea Level Solutions Center and Miami Beach Urban Studios

**Date:** July 7, 2020

**A. Background**

The City of Miami Beach Board of Commissioners at its March 18, 2020 meeting unanimously passed a resolution to develop and launch an "inspirational resiliency vision campaign" (Vision Campaign), which will envision the "living with water" concept in Miami Beach, and directed the City's administration to recommend an approach to the Commission's Land Use & Sustainability Committee.

The Vision Campaign addresses life in Miami Beach in 2070 given the City's primary nature-based challenges: sea level rise, hurricanes, and now epidemics. It is not a policy vision, but presents an opportunity to visualize inspirational possibilities for daily life in Miami Beach five or more decades from now, representing a community that is sustainable, enjoyable and welcoming for all.

The need for an Inspirational Resiliency Vision Campaign has been recognized by many. New images are necessary that effectively highlight the ways in which Miami Beach in 2070 will be a vibrant and exciting place to live and work. These images should inspire policy and planning in a positive and productive direction. And of course, these inspirational visions need to be based upon resiliency measures that build upon the present and take the city through policy and practice into a brighter future. Absent this, the City risks its future is being painted in excessively 'gloom and doom' colors. Lacking a Vision also makes it difficult for the community and many stakeholders to connect-the-dots, maintain perspective and buy-in to the various project initiatives that the City is and will be proposing. Finally, a shared Vision can become a launch pad for stakeholders and investors to commit the resources, time and effort needed to create a thriving 'living with water' future for Miami Beach.

In particular, residents, who in a relatively short period experienced many initiatives addressing near-term challenges, will now have an opportunity to input on the longer-term plan and the City's future look and feel.

## **B. Recommended Approach**

The process of developing the Vision Campaign is critical to its success and acceptance. The approach we recommend is to structure and organize an international competition of alternative visualizations looking out 50+ years that will engage local, regional, national and international stakeholders in public discussion and leverages to the greatest extent possible resiliency efforts already underway .

The reasoning for the recommended approach is that Miami Beach is an international city. The majority of its future investors, residents and visitors are not here today; they're around the country and world. They receive and absorb information and opinions from multiple sources, most of which are not local, and some of which are ill-informed and alarmist.

As an international city, Miami Beach deserves to cast a global net to attract the best thought leadership and expertise the world can offer. The City is already under an international spotlight. It might as well capitalize on the world's interest in its future.

No matter how good, no one single company, university or institution can come up with all the best ideas. The goal is to bring together the best of global and local. To combine global expertise with local insight, it is suggested that an entry requirement be that non-local entrants find and form teams with local participants.

Community members will be involved in reviewing each stage of the competition. At the outset, they will be invited to create a "wish list" of elements for designers to include in inspiration visions of the city. They will be invited to provide input on the designs as they start to take shape and will ultimately participate in the selection of the winning inspirational visions presented to City.

The proposed process aims to attract many qualified parties with an interest in the process and can be mostly funded by donors and sponsors. The initial applicants will be screened and selected based on their backgrounds, approaches and willingness to participate in the process.

To stimulate participant interest, offset a portion of their costs and raise public excitement, we propose that the Vision Campaign competition, in addition to recognition and publicity, offer monetary awards to 'winning teams'. These resources will be raised from non-profit, business and maybe governmental donors who have an interest in SE Florida. One such non-profit has already committed to fund an award and we believe that others can be encouraged to join.

Entrants will be required to participate in public forums, and encouraged to provide community outreach and/or workshops (online and in-person depending on conditions) to invite discussion and feedback on their draft ideas, before making their final submissions.

The selected teams will initially be guided through a detailed orientation phase, which will include vision assumptions. This might be guided by the idea that the city's most vulnerable areas may no longer exist in their current forms. Teams will be asked to include land use, homes, buildings, transport, utilities, energy, water, parks, landscape, beaches, logistics, commerce, education, recreation and art, among other things, in their visualizations.

The competing teams should embrace existing initiatives and new innovations in envisioning an inspirational future. Given the existing initiatives in place in terms of green, blue and gray infrastructures, the magnitude of challenges ahead and the potential technological innovations, may assume that life in Miami Beach in the year 2070 will be a complex extrapolation of the past and present into the future. Teams will be encouraged to embrace out-of-the-box 'imagineering' and assume continuous technology progress.

In addition to withstanding future natural hazard events, this includes ideas that

- achieve low-carbon cyclical economy
- reduce environmental degradation
- improve quality of life
- create a healthy environment more easily adaptable to climate change and future epidemics
- attract investment
- sustain and create new forms of tourism
- enhance diversity, economic prosperity and social inclusion.

We recommend that teams be encouraged to envision a future city where people enjoy living, working, investing, visiting and relaxing/entertaining – a city that outcompetes other cities vying to surpass or replace it.

The teams' submittals should be highly visual in expressing a future 'Day in the Life of Miami Beach'. Images, virtual videos, 3D products and physical models should be used to stimulate public interest, brainstorming, dialogue and feedback.

The end objective is not to select one single 'winning vision' of a city that can flourish and adapt to its nature-based challenges, but perhaps a subset of 3-5 finalists. These could blend preferences by community members, the general public and a 'Finalists' Committee'. The process thus produces a set of inspirational alternatives that stakeholders will continue to discuss and evaluate, gradually forming the 'connecting glue' for the policies and projects that over time the City will propose and implement. It may also help direct the community toward useful blueprints for rebuilding the City following a severe hurricane event, a plan more calmly discussed before any event, than in the post-event recovery.

With COVID-19 and important elections during 2020, it is suggested that the current year be used to plan and organize the competition framework, resources, materials and key collaborators. The actual process kick-off can be in 2021.

### **C. Proposed Role of FIU**

FIU has a significant presence in SE Florida, a strong relationship with Miami Beach, and an interest in its future prosperity. It hosts many interdisciplinary centers of excellence. Three are collaborating on this proposal, combining urban development issues, sea level rise challenges and strategies for coping with extreme events.

FIU's role would be as a co-production partner with the City of Miami Beach providing support, advice, assistance and any services the City might need on the following:

1. Structure and manage an international Vision Campaign competition.
2. Approach and secure program and competition awards donors and sponsors
3. Develop materials that will announce the competition and invite applicants
4. Develop a Vision Campaign competition public website and secure organizers and team workspaces
5. Develop the selection criteria for screening applicants to determine the competing teams
6. Develop the future scenario assumptions
7. Develop materials and conduct the team orientation phase sessions
8. Address questions and provide feedback/advice to the competing teams
9. Structure the public/community/stakeholder interaction phase
10. Create a Finalists Committee
11. Develop the finalists' selection criteria
12. Develop post-competition communications, engagement and follow-on action plans

### **D. Proposed Role of City of Miami Beach**

The City of Miami Beach Chief Resilience Officer, the Director of Communications, and other staff members identified by the City would be contacts with FIU. In addition to participating in all mentioned under FIU's role, the City would also provide the following:

1. Distribute promotional materials
2. Host the competition website within Rising Above.
3. Provide access to any City information needed to aid the competition and facilitate in obtaining information from any government entities
4. Provide communications and outreach resources and services for the competition
5. Provide/host any meeting and forum spaces that FIU cannot provide

### **E. Funding and Organization**

This plan does not anticipate any financial commitments by the City to FIU in 2020. If fund-raising for the project is successful, funds will be distributed by FIU and the City of Miami Beach as

determined to be necessary by the Steering Committee mentioned below. It is not expected that funding would flow from the City of Miami Beach to FIU, or the other way around.

We envision the creation of a Competition Steering Committee to oversee the competition's success, with key members from the City, FIU and perhaps 1-2 major non-profit/ association donors.

## **F. Next Steps**

This draft proposal summary will be further discussed with the City of Miami Beach Chief Resilience Officer and with FIU's Vice President for Engagement, who manages the FIU/City of Miami Beach partnership. If a shared understanding is reached, it will be presented at an upcoming City Land Use and Sustainability Committee. If approved, it will be finalized for presentation to the City of Miami Beach Commission shortly thereafter. If approved by the Commission, work could begin in August or September.

## **G. Conclusion**

In closing, Miami Beach has the opportunity to develop inspirational visual depictions of the city it aspires to be in the latter half of this century. By going through the Vision Campaign creation process, the local community and the world can better focus on helping realize this proactive future, rather than reacting to alarming images conjured up by others to fill the void.

The Vision Campaign will provide many messages and visuals that the City can use in its communications campaign with residents, businesses, investors, other government entities and interested parties around the world. It provides a basis for continued dialogue with local communities and stakeholders on the City's future. Its output can be showcased and updated both electronically and in designated physical settings. Finally, it will likely serve as a genesis for follow-on studies, analyses and programs.

Miami Beach's success can also create a new role model for other cities around the world facing climate resilience challenges. FIU is proud to be a part of this enormous challenge.