

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH**  
**Office of the City Manager**  
**Letter to Commission No. 291-2004**



**To:** Mayor David Dermer  
Members of the City Commission

**Date:** November 10, 2004

**From:** Jorge M. Gonzalez  
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge".

**Subject: Proposed Drexel Avenue Improvements**

Recently, the City received an anonymous letter (attached) that was apparently sent to numerous Drexel Avenue property owners stating that the City was planning to widen the public right of way on Drexel Avenue by ten feet on each side of the street, an action that would require the removal of fences, gates, walls, and landscaping currently existing in this area. The letter urged the property owners to call the City's CIP Office or City Commission to complain about this "taking" of land.

In response to the misinformation stated in the letter, I wanted to provide the Commission with the facts about the proposed Drexel Avenue improvements. Through the Flamingo/Lummus Neighborhood Right of Way Improvement Project, plans were developed to reconfigure Drexel Avenue between 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Lincoln Road to provide for a center pedestrian walkway, or esplanade, which would provide an important link, both visually and functionally, between Lincoln Road and Espanola Way. A schematic plan of the Drexel Avenue improvements is attached. This element of the Flamingo Neighborhood ROW Improvement Project was discussed at length in the two community meetings held during the Project planning phase and was strongly supported by residents in attendance.

It was included in the Basis of Design Report for the Project, a document that was reviewed and approved by all City Departments, the Historic Preservation Board, and ultimately the City Commission.

Work on the Flamingo Neighborhood Project construction drawings is approximately 60% complete, and as part of the community input process, these construction drawings will be presented to community residents at a Community Design Review Meeting sometime this fall. The construction documents will also be presented to the Historic Preservation Board for official approval.

The City right of way on Drexel Avenue is 70 feet wide. The current back edge of sidewalk on each side of the street is set back approximately 9.5 feet from the right of way line. As in the case on most City streets, over time property owners and residents have installed unpermitted hedges, fences, and other hardscape and landscape material in this area between the back of sidewalk and the right of way line. Photographs of some of these encroachments are attached. The improvements proposed for Drexel Avenue would require the full use of the right of way to accommodate a 5 foot wide sidewalk and six inch curb on each side of the street, a 7 foot wide parallel parking lane and 12.5 foot wide travel lane on each side of the street, and a 20 foot wide center pedestrian walkway. The need

to utilize the full right of way to accommodate the Drexel Avenue improvements was discussed at the community meetings held at which residents expressed strong support for the Project. There is no way to construct the promised and approved improvements without removing those encroachments that exist in the 9.5 feet from the current back of sidewalk to the private property line.

The City's procedure regarding right of way encroachments that are required to be removed is to provide adjacent property owners with ample notice, which would be a minimum of 90 days, to enable residents to relocate onto their own property any hardscape or landscape materials that they wish to keep. Notice has not been given to Drexel Avenue residents yet because the start of construction is still some time away. While the removal of right of way encroachments is a sensitive issue for some City residents, in this case there was a very strong community consensus that the proposed improvements justified the removal of encroachments.

In response to the letter that was distributed, the CIP Office has received two inquiries to date. CIP staff met with the two property owners, and both indicated that they were strongly in favor of the improvements.

The issue of the need to remove the Drexel Avenue encroachments will be discussed again with the community at the pending Community Design Review Meeting, and affected property owners will be provided with at least 3 months notice of the need to remove the encroachments prior to construction, which is expected to begin sometime in late 2005 or early 2006.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information about this matter.

  
JMG/RCM/TADPS  
Attachments

C: Robert C. Middaugh, Assistant City Manager  
Tim Hemstreet, CIP Director  
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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Attn: Ronnie Singer

September 20, 2004

Dear Drexel Avenue Property Owner,

As you may know, the City of Miami Beach is in the process of major neighborhood improvements throughout the City. The northern part of the Flamingo neighborhood is no exception. Included in the proposed plans for our neighborhood is the widening of the public right-of-way on Drexel Avenue from 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Lincoln Road. In order to implement its design for this street, the City **MUST** reclaim the land which has been encroached upon over the years by those properties which have fences, gates, walls, walkways, landscaping, parking spaces, etc., in the right-of-way. **This means that any of the above improvements which are within approximately ten feet of the sidewalk on each side of the street will be removed by the City and not replaced.**

It is imperative that you contact the City's Capital Improvement Office at 305-673-7071 to ask how the proposed improvements will affect your property. **You could end up losing the use of a valuable piece of property and those improvements on it which you have paid for and enjoyed the use of for years.**

You may also want to contact the Mayor and City Commissioners at 305-673-7030 to find out why the City is proposing to take away land which has been attached to your property for decades **without any direct notice to you.**

One of the Affected Parties

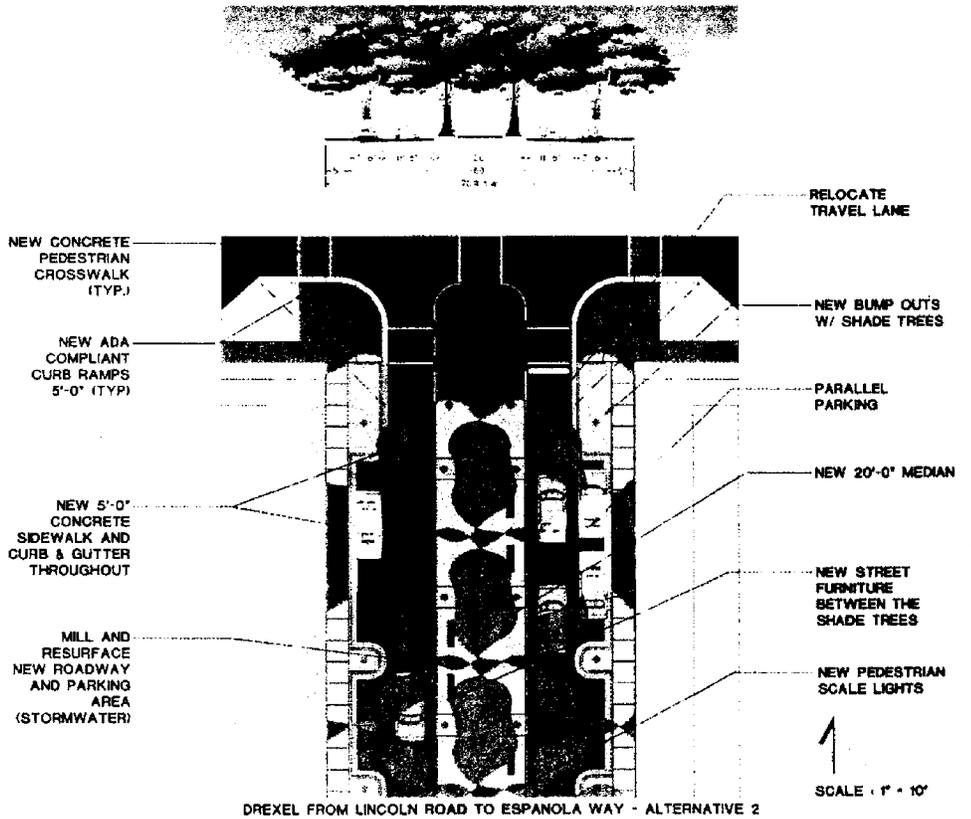
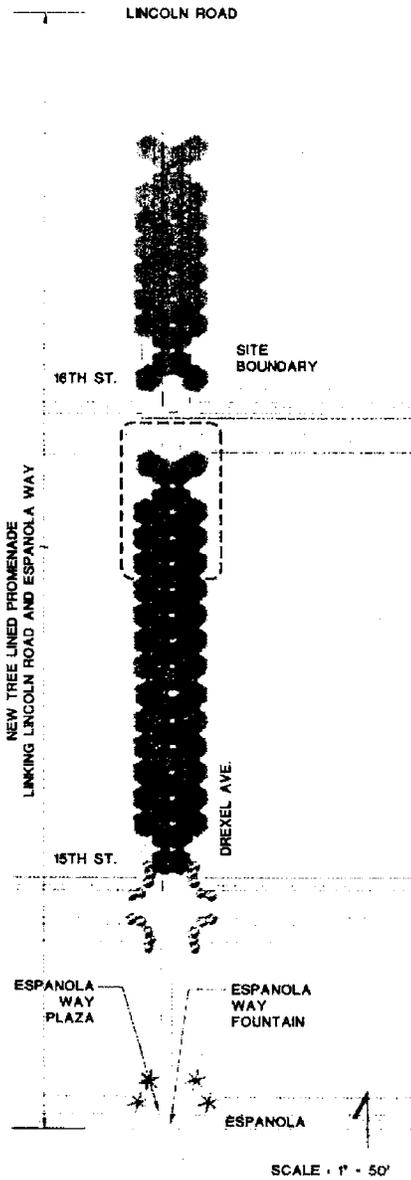
Be aware that you may have legal recourse since the City has, in essence, abandoned the right-of-way.

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# FLAMINGO LUMMUS

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

## DREXEL AVENUE CORRIDOR - LINCOLN TO ESPANOLA



**FLAMINGO LUMMUS**  
 2025 E.D.  
 773 7th Street  
 Miami Beach, FL 33139  
 Tel: 305-666-1973  
 Fax: 305-666-1776  
 www.flamco.com

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH**  
 1700 Convention Center Blvd  
 Miami Beach, FL 33139





