

Miami Mayor Is Now the Power Player in Land Development Outside Urban Development Boundary in Miami-Dade County: Will He Move the Line?

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With the new [Community Planning Act](#), the State of Florida is no longer regulating and overseeing land development in Florida, and that includes decisions on where the Urban Development Boundary will be, and what gets built outside of the UDB. Now, the local government will be responsible for those decisions -- and that means it's now part of the job for the new mayor of Miami-Dade County.

Who is the new mayor? We won't know until the runoff later this month.

On June 28, 2011, [Julio Robaina](#) and [Carlos Gimenez](#) will face a runoff election for Mayor of Miami-Dade County. Robaina is a former city mayor (Hialeah, Florida) and Gimenez is a former county commissioner (Miami-Dade) so either man, if elected, will not be new to the business of local government.

The key for real estate investors and land developers is what the future of real estate development in the Miami metroplex. What will happen to the Urban Development Boundary once the new mayor is elected?

This week, [the Miami Herald reported on a meeting held between these two candidates and several groups concerned about the Florida environment](#), particularly the Miami area, where the environmental interests outlined their concerns to the two candidates in the hopes that the new local government will not lessen the growth management regulations that had been in place under the old state law.

Not too long ago, conservationists had a friend in the Governor's office. In [2009, Governor Crist forbid](#) by executive order Miami Dade County Commissioners' attempt to move the Urban Development Boundary so that it overlapped into the Everglades National Park and its wetlands so developers could build a Lowe's shopping plaza. With Florida's current governor, Rick Scott, times have changed. The Florida lawmakers are concerned with fighting the Great Recession and in passing the Community Planning Act, this type of state intervention is a thing of the past.

Accordingly, environmentalists consider the Urban Development Boundary an election issue, and it's not the first time that the UDB has been a factor in a local government election. Back in 2005, [there was a big "Hold the Line" fight in Miami](#) where development was seen as dangerous to the community and the UDB an important tool in keeping back real estate interests.

What is the Urban Development Boundary?

Also known as an "[urban growth boundary](#)," this is a line drawn on a map as a legal boundary that determines land use in the given area. On one side of the line, real estate development can be "high density," and on the other side, it cannot. UDBs are zoning laws designed to protect a community from rampant, uncontrolled urban growth or "urban sprawl."

Will the new Miami Mayor allow the UDB to be changed in order to help land developers from Florida, the United States, Mexico, and Latin America built in the Miami area -- bringing much needed jobs and revenue into our community? Let's hope so.

Remember, the Community Planning Act doesn't bar a challenge to a development on environmental grounds, it merely places the burden of any challenge upon the conservationists to prove harm will occur instead of the old way of doing things, where the developer was under the burden of proving a negative: that there would be no harm.

Moving the UDB does not doom Miami's natural beauty. It does help Miami become more attractive to real estate investors - and that's so very important in today's economy.