



MEMORANDUM  
COMMISSIONER XAVIER L. SUAREZ

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TO: Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa DATE: December 17, 2013  
FROM: Xavier L. Suarez RE: MLS Stadium  
Commissioner, District 7

Over the past few days, I have wrestled (as I suspect we all have), with the issue of an MLS stadium siting. Bringing major league soccer to Miami-Dade is a dream we have all had for a couple of decades. The mayor is to be commended for his initiative in this matter. I also commend Deputy Mayor Chip Iglesias for reaching out to me and participating in a briefing given to me by the representatives of the Beckham group.

Having said that, let me share with my colleagues what I have explored and what I have learned from various meetings in an effort to vote intelligently on the resolution drafted at the request of Commissioner Barreiro. In doing so, I have assumed two constraints on our vote: (a) a shortness of time in which to send a clear signal of support for the MLS initiative; and (b) what appears as a clear preference for a location within the highly populated urban core.

#### Downtown Sites Discussed.

1. With my own staff, and with the aid of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado and Horacio Aguirre, I explored various sites in the immediate vicinity of the Performing Arts Center. Although some of the sites were appropriate in terms of size, none seemed to fit the bill – in one case because of the view corridors demanded by patrons of the PAC.
2. With officials from FP&L, I explored the site of the substation located immediately west of the Miami Riverside Center. (Modern technology allows that multi-acre facility to be condensed into a fraction of the space, which impelled me some years ago to propose moving it into a much smaller site under the Metrorail line, in order to fit a baseball stadium at the current site of the substation.) I think the idea should continue to be explored, either for MLS or for some other development that is more compatible with downtown Miami. However, the prohibitive cost, coupled with the apparent time constraints, make this more of a long-shot.

### Alternative Sites in the Urban Core.

1. Marlins Stadium. Mayor Regalado explained to me that the new MLS franchise would consider that venue a temporary one while the new stadium is built. I gather the idea of permanently sharing the facility is disfavored, due to scheduling conflicts, given that the seasons of both sports are almost identical. I wonder, however, if a twin facility, which could at least share some of the parking and which could be the site of major worldwide competitions, such as the World Cup and other multi-sport events, would make sense.

2. Miami Intermodal Center (MIC). I personally like the parcel east of the terminal, which comprises 8.5 acres – nearly enough for the footprint of the stadium. It abuts 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue. On the other side of 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a warehouse district where real estate goes for about \$20 per square foot, which makes an acre about \$900,000. Four or five acres cost no more than four million dollars. And if all or part of the seven blocks of 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue is closed, that adds as much as three acres to the site. Superficially, this to me seems like a much better site than the Port of Miami, and it is mostly government-owned land. In terms of population, this site is quite close to being the very center of the urban core. It is reachable by both mass transit and important highways and arteries.

**Proposal.**

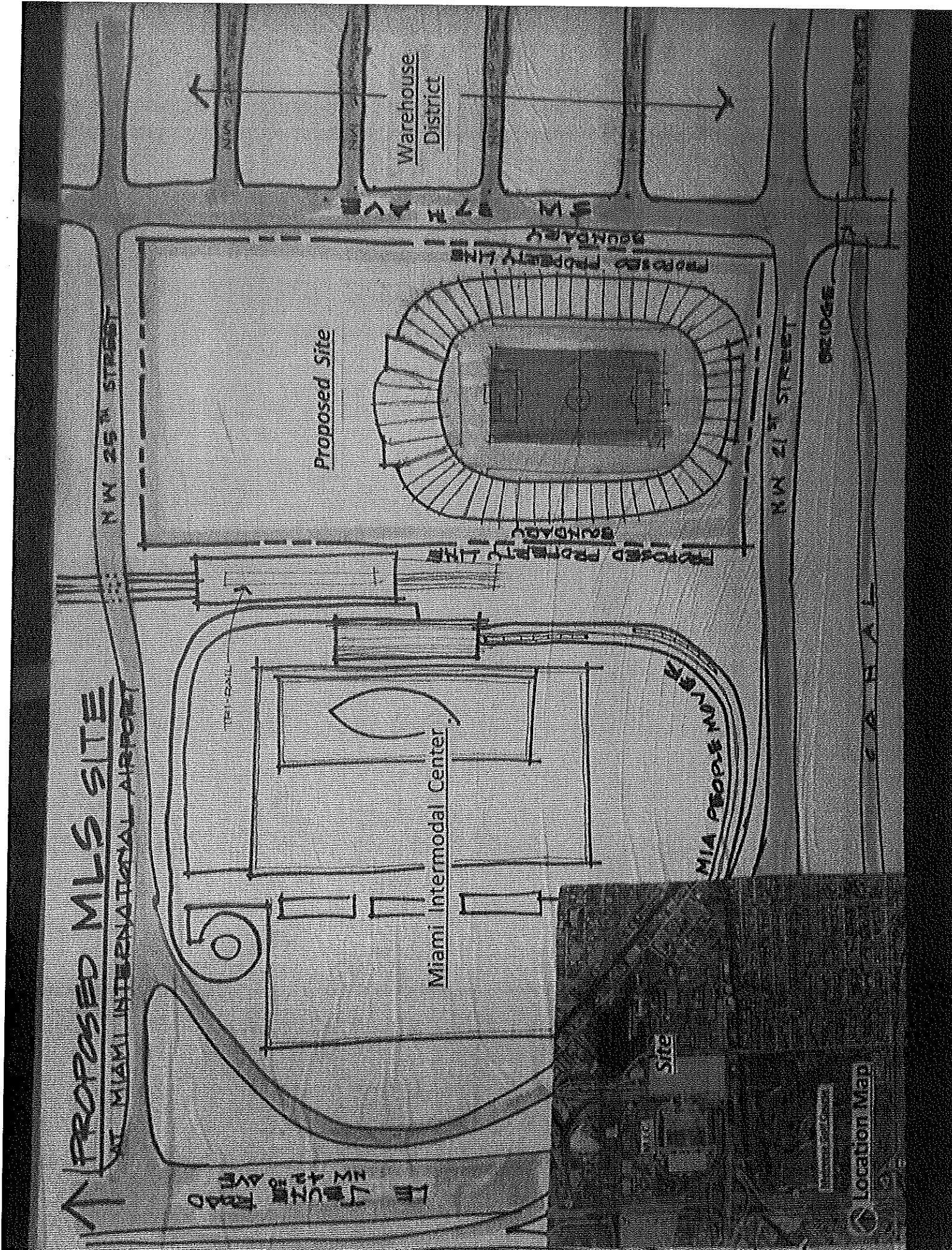
Based on the above, and on other ideas that I understand to be floating around, the wording of the resolution should be changed to read "in or around downtown Miami or in the urban core adjacent to mass transit." This wording has the virtue of being inclusive of a MIC-area site without excluding any of the other sites being discussed. Moreover, it is important to not concentrate the debate on the Port of Miami site, which – quite frankly – is not being received well by most people with whom I have discussed it. (The reservations I hear are based on many concerns – not the least of which is concern about security in that important trade-and-passenger facility.) The county attorney has kindly drafted a substitute resolution that adopts the more inclusive wording suggested above.

Very truly yours,



Xavier L. Suarez  
Commissioner, District 7

Cc: Members, Board of County Commissioners



# Location Map

Melreeese Golf Course

Site

M.I.C.



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