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Allapattah Residents Concerned About Neighborhood's Future Development

By ALEXANDER GONZALEZ · OCT 9, 2018

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A house on Northwest 33rd Street in the Allapattah neighborhood of central Miami. Developers and investors are buying properties there because it's close to downtown and Wynwood.

CHARLES TRAINOR JR. / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Developers and investors looking for the next Miami real estate diamond in the rough are [venturing into Allapattah](#), one of the city's oldest neighborhoods bordering trendy Wynwood.

That proximity to the city's booming urban core, along with Metrorail access and riverfront views, have prompted discussion over the future of development in Allapattah, which some say is at a crossroads.

City leaders, residents and business partners met Tuesday for a public meeting called "Allapattah at the Crossroads," held at the University of Miami's Life Sciences Building.

City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez gave a short keynote address, saying the neighborhood should retain its character and avoid becoming a “W.O.W. district” – West of Wynwood.

“This neighborhoods’s growth depends on responsible development practices, which will help it continue to emerge as a vibrant part of Miami’s cultural scene,” he [tweeted](#).



Mayor Francis Suarez ✓

@MiamiMayor



Happy to speak about the future of [#Allapattah](#) at the [@ymcasoflo](#) and [@MiamiChamber](#) Housing Solutions Panel. This neighborhood’s growth depends on responsible development practices, which will help it continue to emerge as a vibrant part of [#Miami](#)’s cultural scene.

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[See Mayor Francis Suarez's other Tweets](#)



On the panel were Willy Gort, city commissioner for District 1, which includes Allapattah; Pat Gajardo, president of the Allapattah Neighborhood Association; Andrew Hellinger, a principal of the Coral Gables-based developer Urban-X Group; Michelle Moyer, executive director of the Allapattah YMCA Family Center; and Lyle Stern, president of the Koniver Stern Group, a retail leasing company based in Miami Beach.

Moderated by WLRN’s Tom Hudson, the discussion focused on affordable housing and its role in future development projects, like [River Landing](#), a shopping and



Left to right, Lyle Stern, president of a retail leasing company, and Michelle Moyer, executive director of the Allapattah YMCA Family Center, spoke in a five-member panel about the future of Allapattah neighborhood in Miami. WLRN's Tom Hudson, on the podium, moderated the discussion.

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residential complex under construction at North River Drive and Northwest 11th Street, on the Miami River.

Hellinger says River Landing could serve people working in the nearby health district – or those making an average salary of \$55,000 a year. The median annual salary in Allapattah is **about \$23,000** and it's **predominantly** a renter's community.

Gajardo, who grew up in the area, hopes it can avoid the negative outcomes of

gentrification.

“There’s skepticism in our community,” he says. “I have childhood friends who’ve been priced out and had to move out. We don’t want that.”

Dianna Rivera, a pastor, has been living in Allapattah for more than 14 years. Throughout that time, she’s opened Citi Church and an accompanying private Christian school there.

She attended Tuesday’s meeting and said she’s worried about losing the spirit of her home.

“My concern is that developers are just after their profit and they can sometimes overlook the heart of a community,” she says. “We look at us as being in the urban heart of Miami, and there’s a heart to a city. It’s not just buildings. It’s not just concrete.”