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# Little Havana designated national treasure

## Area now protected by National Trust for Historic Preservation

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**MIAMI** - Miami's Little Havana was designated a national treasure Friday by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The distinction means that those who work or live in the neighborhood will have guidance in making sure it remains a vibrant, unique place with a bright future, officials said.

"We feel the National Historic Trust will be the best partner ever in keeping the ambiance of Little Havana, but at the same time, making sure that the world knows that there is a Little Havana here in Miami," Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado said.

Little Havana stands as a testament to the immigrant spirit in America and in South Florida, officials said.

The area is now protected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which will help the neighborhood keep its original mission and charm.

"There's a lot of pressure on Little Havana today for redevelopment," Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said. "It's a great opportunity for redevelopment in the eyes of some people, but we think Little Havana is very special the way it is today, and that it's providing a lot of benefits to both the community here and to the city overall."

At a news conference Friday inside the Manuel Artime Theater, the trust announced a planning process that will help stakeholders plan for growth without pushing out residents and small business owners.

"That's the big buzzword right now, gentrification in Miami, where working-class people are being forced out because of possible overdevelopment or unthoughtful development," Christina Rupp, executive director of Dade Heritage Trust, said. "So this is not an anti-development theme; this is we need development and the neighborhood needs to evolve, but in a thoughtful way."

The campaign will also help address threats in the area, like the demolition of historic buildings and zoning changes.

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