



Press Release | Miami, Florida | January 27, 2017

Nation's Leading Historic Preservation Organization Names Miami's Little Havana a National Treasure

National Trust for Historic Preservation Also Unveils New Research Underscoring Little Havana's Affordability, Population Density and Opportunities for Growth

Author:

Virgil McDill

Contact Email:

pr@savingplaces.org [Link: <mailto:pr@savingplaces.org>]

Contact Phone:

202-588-6141 [Link: tel:202-588-6141]

Miami's Little Havana—a neighborhood that stands as a testament to the immigrant spirit that built America and a place that remains a dynamic, culturally rich, and affordable neighborhood—was today named a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In partnership with Dade Heritage Trust, PlusUrbia Design, and Live Healthy Little Havana, the National Trust is today launching a long-term planning process that seeks to work with neighborhood residents, civic leaders, and local partners to ensure that [Little Havana](#) [Link: /little-havana] can remain a thriving, healthy and livable community that embraces its past while planning for a brighter future.

Despite Little Havana's significance and its continued role as a home to thousands of Miamians, the neighborhood currently faces a range of threats, including development pressure, demolition of historic buildings, displacement of existing residents, and zoning changes that could impact its affordability, cultural richness, and character. To address these threats, the Trust is launching a planning process to work with neighborhood residents and other stakeholders on solutions that encourage continued growth while preserving the neighborhood's unique character.

The National Trust's experience and research demonstrates that the rehabilitation and reuse of older and historic buildings is a key to revitalizing urban neighborhoods for the benefit of residents. Building on this, the Trust recently launched an initiative called **ReUrbanism** **[Link: /reurbanism]** that emphasizes the many ways that creatively reusing older buildings can benefit communities. For example, ReUrbanism research in Little Havana suggests that a strategy based on preservation could retain the character, density, scale and affordability that have long defined Little Havana. Key findings include:

Blocks of modest older, smaller buildings in Little Havana have the same level of population density as the nearby towers of Brickell, but in Little Havana, these levels of population density are contained in historic, human-scale buildings.

More than half of Miami's 100 most densely populated city blocks are located in Little Havana.

Miami's greatest concentrations of rental housing in general and affordable rental housing in particular are found in Little Havana. Though Little Havana takes up about seven percent of Miami's land area, it contains close to 20 percent of the city's rental housing stock and more than a quarter of the city's housing rented for less than \$1,000 per month.

Little Havana is host to thousands of small businesses and hundreds of women and minority-owned businesses. The commercial corridors of Little Havana—Calle Ocho, 12th Avenue, Flagler, and others—have some of the city's highest concentrations of such businesses.

"Little Havana is a symbol of the immigrant experience in America and a thriving, entirely unique place that thousands of people currently call home," said Stephanie Meeks, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "The National Trust welcomes the urban resurgence that is breathing new life into cities across the country, but we also believe that growth should not come at the expense of the vibrant historic neighborhoods like Little Havana that make cities unique and desirable places. As we work to preserve and celebrate Little Havana, we want to make sure it remains a healthy, vital, and affordable urban neighborhood."

"This historic designation enshrines the diverse culture and history of Little Havana," said City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado. "Little Havana has been the destination for hundreds of thousands of Latin American immigrants since the 1960s seeking the promise of a new

life in America. This national recognition confirms the neighborhood's cultural significance in the immigrant experience."

"This partnership represents an opportunity to protect and strengthen one of the most authentic neighborhoods in America," said Juan Mullerat, Director at PlusUrbia Design. "With development pressures encroaching from Brickell and Downtown and a zoning code that often favors tear down and replacement with out-of-scale superblock development, we are at risk of losing the rich cultural heritage of Little Havana. Little Havana is Miami's heart and soul, but it is in critical need of a visionary approach to planning and development. Today marks the beginning of people-focused contextual urban design that will preserve and invigorate this diverse urban neighborhood."

"As Miami continues to evolve, preservation will be essential in maintaining Miami's unique urban neighborhoods," said Christine Rupp, Executive Director of Dade Heritage Trust. "Dade Heritage Trust will continue to work with our partners to inform residents and property owners about the cultural and financial benefits of preservation. Our long-term goal is to protect specific historic properties that tell the story of Little Havana and assist with the restoration of those historic buildings to ensure that Little Havana maintains its urban, multi-cultural heritage and vibe. The historic fabric in Little Havana is amazing. 1930's bungalows, 1920's central hallway apartment buildings, coral rock homes, early Miami wood frame houses, and even Art Deco apartment buildings exist within the neighborhood. The preservation of this neighborhood has so many positives from saving these structures that represent different eras in Miami's history to ensuring working class people can remain in this urban, highly desirable area."

Additional Background on Little Havana

Little Havana's story is at the heart of the American experience. From its earliest days as a residential suburb, to its iconic role as a haven for Cuban Americans, to its more recent role as a home to immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean, Little Havana has been shaped by people striving to build a better life for themselves and their families. To this day, visitors to the neighborhood can experience a thriving neighborhood that is truly one-of-a-kind. The neighborhood's unique buildings—local variations of recognized types like the bungalow, center hallway walk-up apartments, and small commercial buildings housing mom-and-pop stores—have served generations of residents who have adapted them to fit their needs. The Trust's research suggests that these character-rich historic buildings can play an essential role in the future growth of Little Havana.

###

About National Treasures

The National Trust for Historic Preservation mobilizes its more than 60 years of expertise and resources to protect a growing portfolio of **National Treasures** [Link: /national-treasures] that are threatened buildings; neighborhoods, communities, and landscapes that stand at risk across the country. Our National Treasures program demonstrates the value of preservation by taking direct action to protect these places and promote their history and significance.

About Dade Heritage Trust

Dade Heritage Trust is a non-profit 501c3 organization founded in 1972. The mission of the organization is to preserve Miami-Dade County's architectural, environmental, and cultural heritage through education and advocacy. Dade Heritage Trust is funded through memberships, private contributions, grants, and public programming proceeds. For more information, call Christine Rupp, Executive Director at 305-358-9572 or visit dadeheritagetrust.org [Link: <https://dadeheritagetrust.org>].

About PlusUrbia Design

[PlusUrbia Design](http://plusurbia.com) [Link: <http://plusurbia.com>] excels at urban design, architectural design, planning, and preservation. The practice designs contextual cities, towns, and neighborhoods that create lasting value. PlusUrbia's diverse team works collaboratively to produce vibrant, adaptable, and sustainable places. The partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation is a perfect fit with PlusUrbia's strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility projects that strengthen community. The studio's Wynwood Neighborhood Revitalization District earned national, statewide, and regional awards from the American Planning Association in 2015. PlusUrbia's Wynwood Walls Garden collaboration won the Urban Land Institute Southeast Florida/Caribbean Chapter Vision Award. It won China's prestigious KINPAN award for Songhua Lake Resort in 2015. PlusUrbia was honored by the Congress for New Urbanism as a member of the team that created the Best City Plan of 2014. Firm founder Juan Mullerat, Assoc. AIA, APA, NCI, CNU, was awarded the 2013 Urban Designer of the Year by the Miami Chapter of The American Institute of Architects.

About Live Healthy Little Havana

[Live Healthy Little Havana](https://www.livehealthylittlehavana.com) [Link: <https://www.livehealthylittlehavana.com>] is an initiative coordinated by the City of Miami and supported by the Health Foundation of South Florida to promote healthier living in Little Havana. The goal is to strengthen community capacity to collaboratively plan and collectively carry out strategies to improve health. Residents and employees of Little Havana expressed concerns about the well-being of residents within the community at meetings and have identified health impact areas: physical activity, primary care, mental health and substance abuse, and nutrition. LHLH has a focus placed on strategies that will foster changes in policy, systems, or the environment, with an emphasis on sustainability.

###

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded nonprofit organization, works to save America's historic places.

[SavingPlaces.org](http://savingplaces.org) [Link: <http://savingplaces.org>] | [@savingplaces](https://twitter.com/savingplaces) [Link: <http://twitter.com/savingplaces>]