

New Publix with Expanded Parking in the Works for South Beach

"We're not trying to bring anything here that will not complement the Beach."—Wayne Pathman, attorney for Potamkin/Berkowitz

By Jason Jeffers
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Motorists driving over the MacArthur Causeway may soon have a new sight greeting them as they enter Miami Beach: an ultramodern Publix Supermarket.

The supermarket, which is being developed by Potamkin/Berkowitz, is slated to be located at 5th Street and Alton Road, and would include a 943 space garage which will provide parking for the facility as well as the rest of the area. Although there is a possibility that another supermarket chain could occupy the building, its developers are certain that Publix will find a home in the building.

"We're beyond preliminary discussions," said Alan Potamkin. "We're ready to go with Publix. We're almost down to the lease."

What makes the supermarket different from other development projects is that the city of Miami Beach will have a stake involved. City officials and representatives from Potamkin/Berkowitz discussed the terms of their agreement at a meeting of the city's Finance Committee last Monday.

According to the initial term sheet, the city would agree to pay for 503 parking spaces in the facility at a cost of \$14,413 per parking space for a total contribution of \$7,250,000 to the project. Those spaces will fall under the city's control and will be operated as a public municipal garage.

Representatives from Potamkin/Berkowitz also explained that the addition retail component of the property could include another store such as a Bed, Bath and Beyond or a Linen Supermarket.

"We're not trying to bring anything here that will not complement the Beach. It will have to be upscale," said Potamkin/Berkowitz attorney Wayne Pathman. "We think this is going to be beneficial to this area."

But some city officials and members of the public questioned whether such a large parking garage was necessary in that area, as opposed to other areas of the city.

Assistant City Manager Christina Cuervo explained that the city had taken that into consideration, but believes that the garage would be necessary in the coming years.

"We do believe in the future that there will be a demand for these spaces," said Cuervo. "The Beach has changed and will continue to change."

Members of the committee finally voted unanimously for the project. Before construction can begin, developers and the city administration have to iron out the agreement before passing it onto the Miami Beach City Commission for a final decision. The project must also go through the city's Historic Preservation and Design Review Boards.

"We're thrilled to go ahead with this," said Potamkin.