

# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE

## CASE STUDY

---

2022 - Present



# STATE OF THE MARKET



- For decades, the Hyatt Regency and James L. Knight site in the heart of Downtown Miami was underutilized and largely inaccessible to pedestrians, creating a traffic chokehold in one of the City's busiest districts
- The aging hotel and concert venue failed to keep up with Miami's growth, where new real estate projects were coming to market at a rapid pace
- Before the onset of the pandemic, Hyatt made two attempts to win public approval for the property's lease extension and significant revitalization of the site, but was unsuccessful
- In 2021, Hyatt partnered with Gencom, a real estate firm based in Miami, to reimagine the site as a mixed-use development with a new Hyatt Regency Hotel, 190,000 SF of Class A meeting space, and 1,500 market-rate apartments
- In November 2022, City of Miami voters weighed in on the project via the ballot referendum to extend the property's lease and usher in \$1.5 billion in new development

# CAMPAIGN GOALS



- Build support for the team’s vision and proposal – among Commissioners, stakeholders, and the voting public – during the approval process and through the referendum
- Anticipate and mitigate potential opposition with the goal of setting the record straight regarding the team’s plans and potential impacts
- Communicate the economic and community benefits that the development will deliver to Miami, with a focus on activating the Riverfront, refreshing the hotel and event space, creating new housing opportunities, and unlocking revenue for the City
- Build credibility for the team behind the project, framing the group as locally-connected, well-capitalized, and a responsible steward of public land

# CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



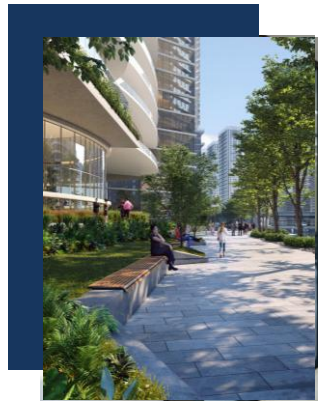
## 1

Created a centralized message platform to feed our integrated campaign via clear cut and methodical messaging that was communicated across several mediums



## 2

Leveraged strengths of development team - Gencom, Hyatt, Arquitectonica - to focus on local roots, international expertise and ability to execute at a world-class level



## 3

Used strategic media relations to demonstrate need for new development in the area, Miami Riverbridge's public benefits and how this project is in step with the new Miami



## 4

Carefully coordinated a public affairs campaign, eliciting community and stakeholder support by demonstrating clear public benefits while mitigating opposition

# CAMPAIGN RESULTS



- Led campaign that gained City Commission **approval of referendum** language in July 2022
- Garnered **64% approval** on the November 2022 referendum for Hyatt and Gencom’s proposal to redevelop the property and extend the lease.
- Long-form **lease and development agreement** were approved by the City Commission in 2024.
- Earned **support of key stakeholder groups** such as Brickell Homeowners Association, the Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association, and the Downtown Development Authority and the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance
- Secured **favorable media coverage** in influential and well-read publications such as *Miami Herald*, *El Nuevo Herald*, *Telemundo 51*, *Radio Caracol*, *The Real Deal South Florida*, *Miami Today*, *South Florida Business Journal*, *Commercial Observer*, etc. spotlighting community benefits deriving from the campaign plan, as well as touting the strength of the development team

# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

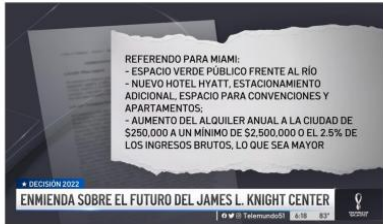


October 27, 2022

UMV: 288,000

## El futuro del James L. Knight Center será decidido por votantes de Miami

La boleta expone una enmienda que "autoriza a Miami a enmendar el contrato de arrendamiento, extendiéndolo a 99 años, renunciando a la licitación y requiriendo que no haya costo para la ciudad".



La Corporación Hyatt ha alquilado esta valiosa propiedad de la ciudad de Miami cerca de la desembocadura del río Miami y de la Avenida Brickell desde 1979.

Tomas Regalado, ex alcalde de la ciudad de Miami, dice que "esa es la propiedad más valiosa que tiene la ciudad de Miami, el terreno que más vale desde el punto de vista de bienes raíces en todo el sur de la Florida".

El hotel y centro de convenciones fue finalizado en 1982.

Ernesto Cuesta, presidente de Brickell Homeowners Association, cuenta que "trajo grandes eventos a esta ciudad, grandes artistas, grandes convenciones y le dio vida a la ciudad de Miami".

Pero muchos están de acuerdo que es hora de revitalizarlo pero hacerlo está en manos de los votantes de la ciudad de Miami.

La pregunta en la boleta dice que "debe enmendarse la Constitución de Miami autorizando a la ciudad a enmendar el contrato de arrendamiento del Hyatt con (sus socios) incluyendo la propiedad del Knight Center, extendiéndolo a 99 años, renunciando a la licitación y requiriendo que no haya costo alguno para la ciudad".



July 29, 2022

UMV: 3,800,000

## Miami voters will decide on major makeover for Knight Center and downtown Hyatt

BY JOEY FLECHAS  
JULY 29, 2022 4:38 PM



This rendering shows the design for a new proposal to redevelop the Knight Center complex into a hotel and residential complex with meeting space and a riverwalk promenade. ARQUITECTONICA

Miami voters will decide in November on the future of the 40-year-old James L. Knight Center complex and Hyatt Regency downtown, a slice of publicly owned property that could undergo a massive redevelopment.

Late Thursday, city commissioners voted to place a question on the Nov. 8 ballot over whether the city should extend a long-term lease on the four acres where the complex sits for 99 years and allow developers to do a \$1.5 billion overhaul of the site at 400 SW Second Ave. near the mouth of the Miami River.

Hyatt Hotels Corp., Gencom and Arquitectonica have proposed a privately funded plan to replace the convention center complex, completed in 1982, with a three-tower structure that would include 615 hotel rooms, 1,500 market-rate apartments, meeting space and a public riverfront promenade.

A "skybridge" with a restaurant would connect two of the three towers, which would rise from one pedestal covering a large driveway that designers say would alleviate traffic in the area. The design includes about 190,000 square feet of meeting space, replacing the current convention space and the 4,500-seat auditorium that typically hosts concerts and graduation ceremonies.



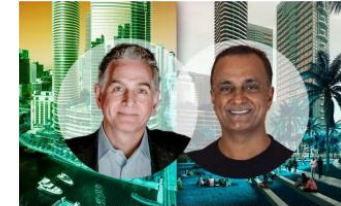
July 29, 2022

UMV: 1,270,000

## Hyatt, Gencom score Miami commission approval for James L. Knight Center referendum

Proposal to redevelop city-owned site into a three-tower mixed-use project will be on November ballot

By Francisco Alvarado  
July 29, 2022 05:29 PM



Hyatt CEO Mark Hoplamazian and Gencom Founder and Principal Karim Alibhai with a rendering of the proposed three-tower development at 400 Southeast Second Avenue (James L. Knight Center) (LinkedIn, Gencom, Arquitectonica)

Hyatt avoided a third strike at possible redevelopment of the James L. Knight Center site in downtown Miami. The Miami City Commission by a 4-1 margin on Thursday approved a voter referendum for the November election that calls for a dramatic makeover of the city-owned property on the Miami River at 400 Southeast Second Avenue.



# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

40th Year  
MIAMI TODAY

August 16, 2022

UMV: 34,100

## 1.5 billion Hyatt project faces November ballot

Written by John Charles Robbins



If approved by voters in the City of Miami, the new Hyatt Hotel and convention center downtown is expected to rise in a five-year timeframe and provide 4,500 construction jobs.

Those are the calculations from HRM Owner LLC, the partnership formed by Hyatt Hotels Corp. and Gencom to revive the riverfront in Miami.

The privately funded redevelopment, to be called Miami RiverBridge, is expected to cost at least \$1.5 billion and bring with it a mixed-use project that would include a new high-end Hyatt hotel, convention and meeting spaces, multi-family housing, and commercial and retail components.

City voters will decide the fate of the new deal between the city and the private developers at the ballot box Nov. 8.

The city commission in July voted 4 to 1 in approving two resolutions related to the new Hyatt hotel proposal and extended lease, and the ballot wording. Commissioner Joe Carollo voted no.

After the successful votes, the Hyatt and Gencom partnership released a statement about the city's positive action and offered more details about what the Miami RiverBridge project will mean to the region.

The partnership promises a reimagined upscale Hyatt Regency hotel with 615 hotel rooms and

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES  
PR • MARKETING

el Nuevo Herald   
elNuevoHerald.com

May 10, 2022

UMV: 2,258,040

## Diseños para la reurbanización del Knight Center y el Hyatt en el downtown de Miami

POR JOEY FLECHAS



Esta representación muestra el diseño de una nueva propuesta para convertir el complejo Knight Center en un complejo hotelero y residencial con espacio para reuniones y un paseo fluvial. ARQUITECTÓNICA

Hyatt Hotels Corp. y dos empresas locales tienen previsto presentar un nuevo diseño para la reurbanización del hotel Regency de la cadena en el downtown y el complejo James L. Knight Center, construido hace 40 años, que lleva mucho tiempo paralizado.

El concepto, que se presentará el martes por la mañana ante un subcomité de la Comisión del Río de Miami, transformaría el complejo del centro de convenciones, terminado en 1982, en una estructura de tres torres que añadiría contornos al perfil arquitectónico de Miami.

Crearía un paseo público a lo largo del río con espacios verdes y una entrada con terraza para restaurantes. Las imágenes facilitadas al Miami Herald muestran que las fachadas redondeadas y de cristales que se extienden hacia el cielo sustituirán al exterior de concreto, más corto y con más bloques.

La propiedad, situada cerca de la desembocadura del río Miami, en 400 SE 2 Ave., forma parte de una lista de emplazamientos antiguos propiedad de la ciudad que han sido objeto de reurbanización durante años, y cuenta actualmente con auditorios, espacios para reuniones y un hotel de 612 habitaciones gestionado por Hyatt en virtud de un contrato de alquiler a largo plazo firmado en 1979. Según los términos

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES  
PR • MARKETING

THE REAL DEAL  
SOUTH FLORIDA REAL ESTATE NEWS

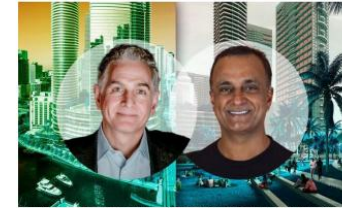
July 29, 2022

UMV: 1,270,000

## Hyatt, Gencom score Miami commission approval for James L. Knight Center referendum

Proposal to redevelop city-owned site into a three-tower mixed-use project will be on November ballot

By Francisco Alvarado  
July 29, 2022 05:29 PM



Hyatt CEO Mark Hoplamazian and Gencom Founder and Principal Karim Alibhai with a rendering of the proposed three-tower development at 400 Southeast Second Avenue (James L. Knight Center) (LinkedIn, Gencom, Arquitectonica)

Hyatt avoided a third strike at possible redevelopment of the James L. Knight Center site in downtown Miami. The Miami City Commission by a 4-1 margin on Thursday approved a voter referendum for the November election that calls for a dramatic makeover of the city-owned property on the Miami River at 400 Southeast Second Avenue.

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES  
PR • MARKETING

# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

## 40th Year MIAMI TODAY

October 19, 2022

Circulation: 27,401

### PROFILE

Karim Alibhai looks for notable project at Hyatt downtown...  
...as his global hotel operations have created 150 transactions

#### THE ACHIEVER



Photo by Dennis Sullivan

Karim Alibhai  
Aims to develop notable project at riverfront Hyatt Regency  
The profile is on Page 4

#### The Achiever

##### Karim Alibhai

Founder and Principal  
Gencom  
2700 Tigertail Ave.  
Miami 33133  
(305) 442-9808  
[info@gencomgrp.com](mailto:info@gencomgrp.com)  
<https://gencomgrp.com/>  
Born: Kisumu, Kenya.  
Age: 58  
Education: Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Rice University.  
Personal philosophy: Learn from your mistakes, always think outside the box and surround yourself with a good team.

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES

## SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

February 8, 2023

UMV: 10,809,854

### Executive Profile: Karim Alibhai on going from one motel to a resort empire



Image: South Florida Business Journal

By Erik Bojnansky — Reporter, South Florida Business Journal

#### Karim Alibhai

Age: 58

Birthplace: Kisumu, Kenya

Residence: Coral Gables

Current position: Founder and principal, Gencom

Previous position: General manager of a Best Western

Education: Bachelor's degree, economics and finance, Rice University

*A fourth-generation Kenyan with forefathers from India, Karim Alibhai began his career in hospitality at a Best Western motel his family owned in Houston.*

*"At one point, it was called 'Gunpoint,'" Alibhai said. "That's how rough it was."*

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES

## LAW360®

July 27, 2022

UMV: 518,000

### Towering Hyatt Proposal Heads To Miami Commission

By Nathan Hale

Law360 (July 27, 2022, 9:12 PM EDT) — Plans to replace Miami's aging downtown convention center and the neighboring Hyatt Regency hotel with a three-tower development featuring a new Hyatt hotel, expanded meeting space and more than new 1,800 apartments alongside the Miami River could take a big step forward on Thursday.

The Miami City Commission is slated to decide whether to put a question on the Nov. 8 general election ballot seeking voters' permission to move forward with the no-bid proposal and an amended lease of the city-owned land under both of the current buildings, which both opened in 1982.



The proposed Miami Hyatt Regency hotel project includes a three-tower complex (above), riverwalk (below left), and open space from pedestrian entry off Second Avenue (below right). (Courtesy of Arquitectonica)



Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES

# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

## SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

November 9, 2022

UMV: 10,809,854

### Miami voters approve redevelopment of Knight Center into ultra-tall tower



By **Brian Bandell** – Senior Reporter, South Florida Business Journal

Voters in the city of Miami approved plans to redevelop the James L. Knight Center and the Hyatt Regency Hotel into a mixed-use project along the Miami River.

The third tower in the project would rise 1,049 feet, making it the tallest building in Florida.

With 199 of 209 precincts reporting, 64% of Miami voters were in favor of the measure, giving it a solid victory. The vote paves the way for the city to amend its lease for the 4-acre site at 400 S. Second Ave. with Chicago-based Hyatt (NYSE: H) and Miami-based Gencom in order to foster redevelopment. Developed in 1982, it currently has a 615-room hotel and the 4,500-seat Knight Center.

With the lease being extended from 45 to 99 years, both buildings would be demolished so Hyatt and Gencom can move forward with the \$1.5 billion project, dubbed Miami Riverbridge.

**Schwartz**  
COMMUNICATIONS

## COMMERCIAL OBSERVER

November 9, 2022

UMV: 178,000

### Miami Beach Votes Down Big Real Estate Projects

*Barry Sternlicht, Stephen Ross and Don Peebles were on the losing end. Miami voters meanwhile greenlighted a major development.*

BY **JULIA ECHIKSON**

#### Unlike in Miami Beach, Developers Win in Miami

Across the bay in Miami, developers had better luck Tuesday. Sixty-four percent of voters approved a 99-year lease extension for a waterfront site in Downtown Miami, paving the way for a \$1.5 billion development.

**Hyatt Hotels** and Miami-based developer **Gencom** plan to tear down the **James L. Knight Center** and build three skyscrapers. Called **Miami Riverbridge**, the development would include 1,542 rental apartments in total, along with 615 hotel rooms and 264 serviced apartments. The annual rent will jump from \$250,000 to at least \$2.5 million. The joint venture has also vowed to make a \$25 million contribution to affordable housing initiatives, the details of which have not yet been released.

"Miami Riverbridge will improve access to and from the Hyatt Regency Miami site, activate the Miami riverfront, and meet growing demand for housing, hotel rooms and more meeting space in our downtown," **James Francque**, global head of transactions for Hyatt, and **Phil Keb**, executive vice president of development for Gencom, said in a joint statement.

<https://commercialobserver.com/2022/11/stephen-ross-related-companies-deauville-beach-resort-barry-sternlicht-don-peebles-james-l-knight-center/>

**Schwartz**  
COMMUNICATIONS

## EL NUEVO HERALD

November 8, 2022

UMV: 2,400,000

### Electores de Miami aprueban este cambio para rascacielos en el paisaje urbano del downtown

POR **JOEY FLECHAS**



Boletas de revisión de la junta de escrutinio de Miami-Dade  
La junta de escrutinio de Miami-Dade revisó las boletas de votación por correo con firma y otros asuntos después del cierre de las urnas el martes para determinar si se contarán para las elecciones generales.  
BY **CAROL JUSTE**

Los electores de Miami aprobaron un plan para permitir que **Hyatt Hotels Corp.** sustituya su hotel **Regency** del downtown y el **James L. Knight Center**, un complejo de 40 años de antigüedad en terrenos de la ciudad cerca de la desembocadura del río Miami, por tres rascacielos.

Ahora, se espera que la empresa hotelera y las autoridades municipales negocien una prórroga del contrato de arrendamiento de 99 años que permita la construcción de **Miami Riverbridge**, un complejo de tres torres con habitaciones de hotel, apartamentos y espacios para reuniones. Se espera que sea una remodelación de \$1,500 millones de una propiedad de la ciudad en 400 SE Second Ave.

**Schwartz**  
COMMUNICATIONS

# MIAMI RIVERBRIDGE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

## Florida Trend

Page 2

AROUND THE STATE  
Miami-Dade

MIAMI  
MIAMI BEACH  
THE KEYS



Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES  
301 N. BIRDAVE

## THE NEXT MIAMI

July 20, 2022

UMV: 163,000



Details of a massive downtown Miami project from Hyatt and development partner Gencorn have been revealed, with city commissioners scheduled to take up the proposal this month.

According to newly released documents, the 3-tower project is planned to include:

- 1,796 residential units (of which 264 will be serviced apartments)
- 615 hotel keys
- 188,000 square feet of gross event space (90,000 square feet net)
- 1,096 parking spaces

The developers previously said there would be three towers, including a 95-story, 1,049-foot supertall. The other two towers would rise 61 stories.

A 99-year lease is being proposed, with the developer paying either 2.5% of gross revenue or \$2,500,000, whichever is larger. They also propose to pay \$5.4 million into an affordable housing fund.

Commissioners are scheduled to vote on whether they want to send the deal to a public referendum at a July 28 meeting.

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES  
301 N. BIRDAVE

## THE REAL DEAL

SOUTH FLORIDA REAL ESTATE NEWS

June 6, 2022

UMV: 657,212

### Hyatt, Gencorn advance three-tower project planned for Knight Center site

Next, Miami City Commission to vote on putting the proposal to a referendum  
By Lidia Dinkova



Developers' nearly \$2 billion plan to build a hotel and multifamily towers on the Miami River site of the James L. Knight Center and Hyatt complex in downtown Miami is gaining ground.

The Miami River Commission unanimously voted on Monday to move forward the proposal by Hyatt Hotels and Gencorn to the next step. The board, which is charged with reviewing projects near the riverbank, is recommending that the Miami City Commission put the project and necessary lease extension for the 4.1-acre city-owned site to a referendum.

If approved, Miami voters would cast ballots on the item on Nov. 8.

Schwartz  
MEDIA STRATEGIES

# DIGITAL CONTENT

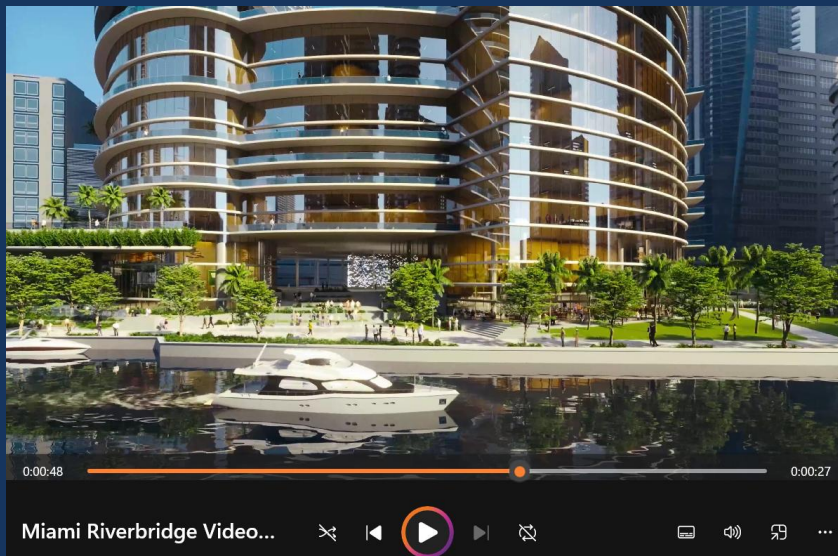
## Campaign Logo



## Website Content



## Video Content



**Miami Riverbridge** is being developed by affiliates of both [Hyatt](#), with a portfolio of more than 1,150 hotel and all-inclusive properties in 71 countries across six continents, and by [Gencom](#), a U.S.-based investment firm that owns, operates and develops real estate and hospitality around the world.

It is being designed by [Arquitectonica](#), a key shaper of the Miami skyline and a global firm that balances a modern aesthetic with an environmentally-sensitive practice.

# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

**Tadd Schwartz** • 1st  
 Schwartz Media Strategies, Public Relations Counselors, President  
 7mo • Edited •

A big step forward for the New Miami...

Miami voters will decide in November on the future of the 40-year-old James L. Knight Center complex and Hyatt Regency downtown, a slice of publicly owned property that could undergo a massive redevelopment as part of a much needed revitalization of the site. via [Joey Flechas & Miami Herald](#).

Late Thursday, **City of Miami** commissioners voted to place a question on the Nov. 8 ballot over whether the city should extend a long-term lease on the four acres where the complex sits for 99 years and allow developers to do a \$1.5 billion overhaul of the site at 400 SW Second Ave. near the mouth of the **#Miami River**.

**Hyatt Hotels Corporation**, **Gencom** and **Arquitectonica** have proposed a privately funded plan to replace the convention center complex, completed in 1982, with a three-tower structure that would include 615 **#hotel** rooms, 1,500 market-rate **#apartments**, meeting space and a public riverfront promenade.

A "skybridge" with a restaurant would connect two of the three towers, which would rise from one pedestal covering a large driveway that designers say would alleviate traffic and congestion in the area - critical to access in and out of downtown Miami.

The design includes about 190,000 square feet of meeting space, replacing the current convention space and the dated 4,500-seat auditorium.

If approved, the developers have also committed \$25 million to **#affordablehousing**, and 15 affordable **#housing** units would be included onsite.

Since first debuting new designs for the project in May, developers have named the proposal Miami Riverbridge.

According to **#Hyatt & #Gencom**.

"Miami Riverbridge will improve access to and from the Hyatt Regency Miami site, activate the Miami Riverfront, and meet growing demand for housing, hotel rooms, and meeting space in our urban core.

The City Commission's decision to place Miami Riverbridge on the November 8, 2022 ballot means Miami voters will have a chance to shape the future of this important site, and we are eager to share our vision with the community in the coming months.

This vote will come down to either maintaining the status quo of Hyatt Regency Miami - or transforming Miami with a privately funded development that will create thousands of **#jobs**, new public green space, better **#walkability** for **#pedestrians**, and a \$25 million contribution for affordable housing in the City of Miami."

Read more at: <https://lnkd.in/gXDtQBga>

**Paul Bomberger Andres Viglucci Rebecca San Juan Francis X. Suarez Miami DDA Kevin Ruiz Phil Keb Alessandro E. Colantonio Al Dotson, Jr. Javier Avino Eric Singer Brian Bilzin Bilzin Sumberg Brian May Karim Alibhai Wendy Kallergis Peter Trujillo Iris Escarra Robert Joseph Martinez Jorian Weiner Tom Bezold Francisco Garcia Iglesias Schwartz Media Strategies #RealEstate**



**Gencom**  
 1,905 followers  
 2mo •

Why is **#Miami** going **#supertall**? According to Gencom Executive Vice President of Development **Phil Keb**, "There's tremendous demand for real estate and the only way to do more is you gotta go up."



PMG, Swire, Related, Hyatt, JDS, FECR Plan Miami Supertalls

therealdeal.com • 6 min read

Tadd Schwartz and 87 others

1 comment • 8 reposts



**Schwartz Media Strategies**  
 2,864 followers  
 4mo •

Miami voters approved the redevelopment of the **Hyatt Regency** and James L. Knight Center site in Downtown by a 64%-36% margin!

This project will be **#FuelingFlorida** and **#MovingMiami** for generations to come, creating new public space on the Miami River, **#millions** for **#affordablehousing**, thousands of **#jobs**, market rate apartments, and a redeveloped Hyatt Regency hotel with **#ClassA** meeting space.

Congrats to **Gencom** and **Hyatt Hotels Corporation** on this win!



Miami voters approve plan for redevelopment of downtown Hyatt and Knight Center

miamiherald.com • 3 min read

**yimbygram** • Follow

**yimbygram MIAMI** - At the end of July, Miami's City Commission voted 4 - 1 in favor of Miami Riverbridge, a three-tower project proposed as the redevelopment of a 4.2-acre city-owned site at 400 Southeast 2nd Avenue in the heart of Downtown Miami, where the Hyatt Regency Miami and James L. Knight Convention Center stand today. Estimated to cost \$1.5 billion, the project would contain over 1,500 residential units, a new flagship 615-key Hyatt Regency hotel and 264 branded serviced apartments, 190,000 square feet of Class A meeting and events space, commercial and retail spaces, over 1,000 parking spaces and 50,000 square feet of open public space including a 480-foot-long rejuvenated riverwalk. Miami Riverbridge is being developed between Hyatt Hotels Corporation and Gencom under the HRM Owner LLC, and is being designed by Arquitectonica. YIMBY predicts the two 61-story towers to rise



647 likes

AUGUST 19, 2022

Add a comment...

Post