

## Miami Beach commissioner to lead Miami's DDA

By [Ashley Portero](#) – Reporter, South Florida Business Journal

The Miami Downtown Development Authority has concluded its search for its next director.

Miami Beach City Commissioner [John Elizabeth Aléman](#) was chosen at the Nov. 15 meeting as the DDA's next executive director. Aléman's selection ends a nearly six-month search to replace longtime leader [Alyce Robertson](#).

The appointment, effective January, must be approved in a final vote during the Miami City Commission's December 12 meeting. Aléman's four-year term as Miami Beach City Commissioner ends this month.

"Commissioner Aléman understands Downtown Miami's opportunities and challenges, and she knows how to build consensus among residents, businesses and the public sector with an eye toward implementing real-world solutions to complex problems," said [Philippe Houdard](#), a DDA board member and founder of Pipeline Workspaces in Downtown Miami who helped lead the director search.

Robertson will stay on with the DDA as a consultant. She will receive a full year's salary of \$198,000. Robertson announced her retirement from the DDA in May, after 11 years at the helm of the development agency.

In a statement, Aléman said she will leverage her civic relationships from her time as a commissioner to help shape Downtown Miami's next phase of commercial and residential growth.

"I am excited to collaborate with the Miami DDA's Board and staff as we enhance quality of life in Downtown Miami," she said. " (I hope to) improve upon the neighborhood's standing as one of the world's most exciting and resilient hubs for business and technology, innovation, lifestyle and culture."

Aléman was elected to the Miami Beach City Commission in 2015. She previously spent almost 15 years as an information technology consultant for Miami-based Ryder Systems, before serving as interim chief information officer at MasTec and board member of the Miami-Dade County Council of PTAs.

Downtown Miami's population skyrocketed over the past decade, leading to an influx of new bars, restaurants, cultural amenities and businesses.

The area's residential population hovers at 92,000, according to the DDA, a 38% increase since 2010. Including commuters, the neighborhood's daytime population surpasses 250,000 and generates a \$38 billion annual economic output, the DDA reports.

But the fast-changing downtown landscape also presents some challenges for Aléman in her new role.

DDA board member **Neisen Kasdin** previously said the organization must focus on improving cleanliness, managing traffic congestion and renovating nearby Biscayne Boulevard and Flagler Street to ensure downtown will continue to attract new residents and businesses.