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**Joseph A. Ruiz, Esq.**

**Partner**



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PH. 786.232.0900

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**PRACTICE AREA EXPERTISE**

**Land Use + Zoning**

Zoning | Land Development Regulations  
Alcohol Beverage & Regulated Industries  
Code Enforcement

**Real Estate Development**

Multifamily Residential  
Lodging | Hospitality  
Office | Commercial Development  
Infill Development  
Water + Sewer

**Local Government Affairs**

Municipal + County Law  
Public Hearing Advocacy

**Neighborhood Revitalization**

Emerging Neighborhood Planning  
Special Districts  
Public Finance and Value Capture Tools

Joseph A. Ruiz is Partner at Wernick & Co, PLLC specializing in land use & zoning, local government affairs, and navigating clients through the local and state regulatory framework to support the Firm's real estate development and neighborhood revitalization practice areas.

Since joining the firm in March of 2021, Joe has represented both landowners and developers at almost every stage of the development lifecycle – from pre-acquisition due diligence to entitlements, obtaining necessary development approvals for new construction or the adaptive-reuse of existing structures. Joe's practice regularly includes platting, special permits, temporary permits, alcohol, modifications to ordinances, historic preservation, rezoning and comprehensive plan amendments, and resolution of complex building and code compliance matters.

Joe has worked with local and national developers on entitlements for prominent mixed-use projects slated for completion in the near future, including Related's *Nomad Residences Wynwood*, *LYNQ Wynwood*, *Wynwood Plaza*, *Mohawk at Wynwood*, *The Rider*, and *La Maré Bay Harbor Islands*.

Joe also has significant experience at the state, county, and municipal levels of government. Prior to joining the firm, Joe served as the City of Miami Zoning Administrator // Director for the Office of Zoning. As the Zoning Administrator, he was responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Miami 21 Zoning Code, appearing before the Planning Zoning and Appeals Board and City Commission, and overseeing zoning approvals ranging from Temporary Use Permits, and alcohol licensing and permitting, to large scale development projects throughout the City of Miami.

Joe previously served as the Chief of Staff to Mayor Francis X. Suarez, where he coordinated the execution of the Mayor's strategic initiatives and handled the day-to-day management of the office. Joe joined the Office of the Mayor after several years as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Miami, assigned to the Land Use/Transactional Division where he practiced public finance, taxation, land use & zoning, and general municipal law.

In his role as Assistant City Attorney, Joe served as legal counsel to the Urban Development Review Board, Coconut Grove Business Improvement District, Wynwood Business Improvement District, and the Wynwood Design Review Committee in its role in reviewing new development and signage pursuant to the Wynwood Neighborhood Revitalization District (NRD-1), following its adoption in 2015.

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## SKILLSET

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Legal Analysis and Problem Solving  
Persuasive Writing  
Execution of Action Plans for Measured Success  
Public Speaking & Advocacy  
Strategic Planning & Advisory Services  
Dependable Leadership  
Zoning Development Feasibility Analysis  
Use of the Legislative or Regulatory Process to Develop and Implement Practical Results  
Local Government Legislation and LDRs

## EDUCATION

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**JD, Florida International University**  
**College of Law**

**BA, Florida State University**  
Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies  
Minor in Film Studies

## PROFESSIONAL LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

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Member of Florida Bar  
United States District Court, Southern  
District of Florida

Prior to joining the City of Miami, Joe served as the General Counsel to the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser and as a legislative aide to a member of the Florida House of Representatives.

## Speaking and Publishing

- Speaker, Community Scholars in Affordable Housing presented by Miami Homes for All, June 9, 2023.
- Guest, Mobility Matters hosted by Javier Betancourt, CITT Executive Director, May 18, 2023.
- Speaker, Racial Wealth Divide – Building High-Impact Nonprofits of Color, October 24, 2017.
- Presenter, “Legal Decisions for Exemption Experts: Immigrants, Aliens & Rentals” & “Legislative Changes That Impact Exemptions”, Annual Conference of the Florida Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers, May 1, 2014.

## Community Service and Leadership Roles

- Miami-Dade County Transportation Planning Organization, Citizens’ Transportation Advisory Committee/CTAC
  - Member: 2021-Present
  - Chairman: January 2023-Present
- Builders Association of South Florida (March 2021-Present)
  - Miami-Dade Legislative Committee
- Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce (March 2021-Present)
  - Business and Government Affairs Committee
  - Public Policy Subcommittee
- Graduate, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative (2018-2019)
- The Florida Bar (City, County and Local Government Law, Environmental & Land Use Law, and Government Lawyer Sections)
  - City, County, and Local Government Law – Sponsorship Committee (2023)