

## ‘After 8 or 9 years,’ signs of life in wayfinding plan

BY CATHERINE LACKNER

With a fresh infusion of \$300,000 from Miami’s Downtown Development Authority, it looks as if a wayfinding system for downtown might finally become a reality. “After eight or nine years, we may be putting signs in the ground soon,” said authority board member Jerome Hollo, vice president of Florida East Coast Realty.

The wayfinding system has been on the drawing boards since 2009. Because the project has faced multiple delays, mostly relating to bid issues and permissions needed to place the signs, the project’s cost had risen another \$500,000, he said.

On July 13, Miami City Manager Emilio González approved a recommendation from the city’s procurement department to award the contract for installing the signs to Florida Engineering and Development Corp. The contract amount for installing the signs is not to exceed \$1.7 million, according to a city memo.

Several years ago, the downtown

authority and the city won a \$1 million federal grant to design, permit and fabricate more than 200 signs that, it’s hoped, will cut through the maze of more than 2,000 conflicting signs downtown and make it easier for visitors to find their way around. The wayfinding system will extend from the Brickell area to the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

The system will include gateway signs for city entrances and various districts; directional signs to landmarks, attractions and parking; informational kiosks with “you are here” maps; and pedestrian and bicycle trail signs, all with a consistent visual theme. Part of the project seeks to limit the jumble of private advertising signs.

The Omni and Southeast Overton/Park West community redevelopment agencies have both given soft commitments to help with the funding, and in return will have signs customized for their districts. The Miami Parking Authority is kicking in \$177,000 for signage related to parking, according to a downtown authority memo.